A COURSE OF LECTURES ON ELOCUTION:

TOGETHER WITH TWO

DISSERTATIONS ON LANGUAGE;

AND SOME OTHER

TRACTS

RELATIVE TO THOSE SUBJECTS.

A NEW EDITION.

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1798.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND,

THE FOLLOWING

COURSE OF LECTURES,

AND

TRACTS ON ELOCUTION,

ARE MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST OBLIGED,

MOST DEVOTED,

AND MOST

HUMBLE SERVANT

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

THERE has been no maxim more frequently inculcated, or more generally aſſented to, than that human nature, ought to be the chief ſtudy of human kind; and yet it is of all ſubjects, about which the buſy mind of man has been employed, that which has been leaſt attended to; or with regard to which, the feweſt diſcoveries have been made, founded upon any certain knowledge.

Is it not amazing to reflect, that from the creation of the world, there was no part of the human mind clearly delineated, till within the laſt ſixty years? when Mr. Locke aroſe, to give us a juſt view, of one part of our internal frame, 'the underſtanding,' upon principles of philoſophy founded on reaſon and experience.

The chief cauſe of the very erroneous, or inaccurate views, given of that part of our nature, before his time, was, as he himſelf confeſſes, accidentally diſcovered by Mr. Locke,

long after he had begun his work; and not till after he had found himſelf entangled in many perplexities, during the purſuit of his ſubject; when lighting accidentally upon this clue, he was happily guided thro' all the mazes of that labyrinth, in which ſo many had fruitleſsly wandered, or been loſt before.

His diſcovery was, that as we cannot think upon any abſtract ſubject, without the uſe of abſtract terms; and as in general we ſubſtitute the terms themſelves, in thinking, as well as ſpeaking, in the room of the complex ideas for which they ſtand; it is impoſſible we can think with preciſion, till we firſt examine whether we have preciſe ideas annexed to ſuch terms; and it is equally impoſſible to communicate our thoughts to others with exactneſs, unleſs we are firſt agreed in the exact meaning of our words.

Accordingly, this acute philoſopher, entered into a ſcrupulous examination of all the terms he uſed, for his own purpoſe, in private meditation; and afterwards gave clear definitions of thoſe terms, for the benefit of others, in communicating to them his thoughts. His labours were attended with ſucceſs. It muſt be evident to all who examine his works with care, that he has treated his ſubject with the utmoſt

utmoſt preciſion, and perſpicuity; and that all who are properly qualified to read his eſſay, will, with due attention, agree in comprehending his meaning exactly in the ſame way.

But in this age of ſpeculative philoſophy, they who turn their thoughts to writings of that ſort, ſeem to have no other object in view than that of merely acquiring knowledge; without once conſidering how that knowledge may be rendered uſeful to ſociety. From the maſtery of one ſpeculative point, they run to another, with the ſame kind of avidity, that miſers purſue the accumulation of wealth; and much to the ſame end: the one, rejoicing in his hoard of concealed knowledge; the other, in his heaps of hidden gold; tho' both are equally uſeleſs to themſelves, and to the world.

Even Mr. Locke himſelf ſeems to have been ſo totally abſorbed in purſuits of that ſort, that he has not in any part of his works pointed out to us, how his diſcoveries might turn out to the benefit of mankind, by any practical plan to try their effects. And accordingly, little or no advantage has hitherto reſulted from them, excepting the ſatisfaction they have given, to men of a ſpeculative turn.

After having ſhewn that moſt errours in thinking aroſe from an abuſe of words; and that moſt controverſies and diſputes, which have been carried on without coming to any concluſion, were owing to the want of clear and preciſe ideas being affixed to the terms uſed by the diſputants; the only remedy Mr. Locke ſuggeſts, is, that men ſhould carefully examine the meaning of each word, and uſe it ſteadily in one ſenſe. And that upon any difference of opinion, the parties ſhould define ſuch terms as are capable of ambiguity, or are of moſt importance in the argument.

But he might have judged from the great difficulty which he himſelf found in accompliſhing this point, and from his own experience, of the great care and pains it coſt, to ſeparate ideas from words to which they were early aſſociated, and cemented by long uſe; that this was a taſk not likely to be performed by many. One would imagine that a philoſopher, before he preſcribed a cure, would have traced the diſorder to its ſource. Nor had he far to ſeek for the ſource of our impropriety in the uſe of words, when he ſhould reflect that the ſtudy of our own language, has never been made part of the education of our youth. Conſequently the uſe of words is got wholly

by chance, according to the company that we keep, or the books that we read. And if neither the companions with whom we converſe, nor the authors whom we conſult, are exact in the uſe of their words, I can not ſee how it is to be expected that we ſhould arrive at any preciſion in that reſpect.

If then irregularity and diſorder, in this caſe, as in all others, muſt neceſſarily follow from neglect, and leaving things to chance; regularity and order, as in all other caſes, can proceed only from care and method. The way to have clear and preciſe ideas affixed to the uſe of words, would be to have mankind taught from their early days, by proper maſters, the preciſe meaning of all the words they uſe.

The riſing generation, ſo inſtructed, would be uniform in the uſe of words, and would be able to communicate their ideas to each other, with eaſe and perſpicuity. Nor would their underſtandings be clouded, in private meditation, by the miſts of obſcurity; nor their ſentiments, when delivered in converſation, perplexed by the intanglements of verbal diſputation. And this might eaſily be effected, if only a fourth part of that time were dedicated to the ſtudy of our own tongue, which is now waſted in

acquiring a ſmattering in two dead languages, without proving either of uſe or ornament to one in a hundred ſo inſtructed.

It is true, Mr. Locke, in his Eſſay on Education, grievouſly complains of our neglect of ſtudying our mother-tongue. But he lays the fault at the wrong door, when he imputes this neglect to the maſters of grammar ſchools, and tutors at the univerſities. This is not part of their province. They neither profeſs to teach it, nor do they know how. Nothing effectual can be done, without making that a diſtinct branch of education, and encouraging proper maſters to follow it as their ſole employment, in the ſame way as the ſeveral maſters in the other branches do. And certainly whether we conſider the difficulty of the thing, or the great ends which might be anſwered by it, the maſters in that branch, ought to meet with as great encouragment, as thoſe in any other.

To the want of an inſtitution of this ſort is it owing, that Locke's noble Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding, has hitherto proved of ſo little benefit to the world. It has indeed afforded ſuch a gratification to men of a ſpeculative turn, as mathematical ſtudies do to thoſe, whoſe enjoyment is bounded by the mere contemplation

templation of truth. But do men think, or reaſon more clearly, than they did before the publication of that book? Have we a more preciſe uſe of language, or are the number of verbal diſputes leſſened? Let thoſe who have examined the many controverſial writings ſince publiſhed, ſay, whether the chief cauſe of theſe endleſs diſputes be not ſtill the ſame, 'an 'abuſe of words.'

Upon the cloſeſt examination, indeed, it would appear, that little or no benefit in point of practice, has reſulted from a diſplay in theory, of the only part of the human mind, which has hitherto been laid open with accuracy, upon principles of true philoſophy.

But ſtill there are two other parts of the human mind, with regard to which the world is at this day, as much in the dark, as they were with reſpect to the whole, previous to the publication of Mr. Locke's eſſay: The one, the ſeat of the paſſions; for which we have no name as exiſting in the mind, unphiloſophically referring it to the organ of ſenſation, the heart: the other, the ſeat of the fancy; which is called the imagination.

Upon a right regulation of theſe parts of the

mind, and the faculties belonging to them, all that is noble and praiſe worthy, all that is elegant and delightful, in man, conſidered as a ſocial being, chiefly depends. Yet ſo far are we from having any juſt view preſented to us of thoſe important parts of our internal frame; or any well-founded knowledge of the principles by which the faculties belonging to them ought to be regulated; that every day we ſee ſome new hypotheſis advanced upon that ſubject, deſigned to overturn all that went before, and laying in the ſame claim, which all that preceded it had done, that of being the only right one.

The variety of treatiſes which have lately been publiſhed on the paſſions, and the number of eſſays on taſte; in which the writers widely differ from each other in their principles, and are far from agreeing in their definitions or deſcriptions of them; ſufficiently ſhew, how far we are ſtill, from having any certain knowledge of that part of our nature, to which theſe belong. And in this ſtate muſt the world for ever continue, whilſt the vanity of ingenious men ſhall prompt them to think, that they can do that by writing, which is beyond the power of writing to accompliſh; and whilſt readers ſhall continue to ſearch for that in books, which

which it is beyond the power of books to teach. Nor are the writers of ſuch treatiſes employed about a work leſs abſurd, than would be that of endeavouring to communicate new ſimple ideas by definitions; or that of attempting to paint ſounds.

All writers ſeem to be under the influence of one common deluſion, that by the help of words alone, they can communicate all that paſſes in their minds. They forget that the paſſions and the fancy have a language of their own, utterly independent of words, by which only their exertions can be manifeſted and communicated. Now if this language be wholly neglected by us; if we have taken no care to regulate its marks, or ſettle the uſe of them with any preciſion; it will follow that the difficulty will at leaſt be as great, to treat with accuracy of thoſe parts of the mind to which that language belongs, as it was of the underſtanding, previous to the proper adjuſtment of words. But when added to this, it is conſidered that this language is in a very poor and defective ſtate amongſt us, and that out of the numberleſs emotions whereof the human mind is capable, there are but a few that have any peculiar marks belonging to them as their ſymbols; it will be found that the difficulty of

treating

treating juſtly of the paſſions and fancy, muſt be much greater, than of the underſtanding; whoſe language was ſufficiently copious, and wanted only regulation; whereas in the other caſe we muſt wait for the gradual increaſe of the language itſelf, till its deficiencies are ſupplied, before we can attempt to regulate it properly, in order to have a comprehenſive and juſt view of the powers of the mind. And indeed till that be done, thoſe nations that have no names for number beyond three, might as well pretend to diſplay all the wonders of arithmetic, as we to delineate the immenſe field of mental emotions, without a ſufficient number of marks to ſtand as their ſymbols. But I will not anticipate upon this head, what the reader will find fully explained, in the courſe of theſe lectures, and diſſertations.

It will be allowed by all perſons of reflection, that there is no ſpeculative point more ardently to be wiſhed for, than to have it in our power to contemplate thoſe parts of the human mind, which are ſtill concealed from us, or falſely viewed thro' the miſts of errour, with the ſame clear ſatisfaction that we find in examining Mr. Locke's view of the underſtanding. But at the ſame time if the means were pointed out, of rendering both theſe views practically

practically uſeful, by ſhewing how a general ſpirit of good ſenſe, and clearneſs of reaſon, might be propagated thro' the natives of this country; by ſhewing how the paſſions hurtful or dangerous to ſociety may be ſuppreſſed, and thoſe of the nobler and ſocial kind, calculated to promote the general good, may be brought forward, invigorated, and carried into due exertion; by ſhewing how the powers of the imagination may be ſo regulated as to diffuſe a general good taſte thro' the nation; a point eſſentially neceſſary to promote ſome of the nobleſt ends that can be anſwered by the two other powers, thoſe I mean of a refined underſtanding, and delicate ſenſibility: it muſt be allowed that the execution of ſuch a plan, would tend more to the real benefit of this realm, than all the uninſpired books that have been written from the creation of the world to this hour.

But it will be ſaid, how, or from whom is this to be expected? Are not theſe the very points about which the moſt eminent of our writers have employed their labours, hitherto to little purpoſe? Have not theſe been the chief objects in the works of our moſt celebrated divines, moraliſts, metaphyſicians, critics, writers of eſſays, &c. and have we any reaſon

to

to believe that this age will produce writings in thoſe ſeveral ways ſuperiour to what have hitherto appeared? Such are the queſtions likely to be aſked by thoſe, whoſe minds have been narrowed by an early falſe bias given to us in our ſyſtem of education, and afterwards continued thro' life; I mean that extravagant idea entertained of the power of writing, far beyond what in its nature it can ever attain. But ſuppoſe it be aſſerted, that this is the very cauſe of the failure, in the attempts made by ſo many men of diſtinguiſhed abilities to reform mankind. Suppoſe it be aſſerted, that they have all uſed an inſtrument, which in its very conſtruction was incapable of accompliſhing the work they were about. In ſhort, that ſome of our greateſt men have been trying to do that with the pen, which can only be performed by the tongue; to produce effects by the dead letter, which can never be produced but by the living voice, with its accompaniments. This is no longer a mere aſſertion: it is no longer problematical. It has been demonſtrated to the entire ſatisfaction of ſome of the wiſeſt heads in theſe realms: and readers of but moderate diſcernment, will find it fully proved in the ſixth and ſeventh lectures, on Tones and Geſture; and in the two following Diſſertations on Language.

But

But that the bulk of my readers, may not enter upon the diſcuſſion of this point, with all their prejudices about them, they are deſired to reflect, that language is the great inſtrument, by which all the faculties of the mind, are brought forward, moulded, poliſhed, and exerted: and that we have in uſe two kinds of language; the ſpoken, and the written. The one, the gift of God; the other, the invention of man. Which of theſe two is moſt likely to be adapted to its end, that of giving the human mind its proper ſhape, and enabling it to diſplay all its faculties in perfection?

If they want to judge by effects produced in our own times, how far the one language has the advantage over the other, let them only reflect on a recent inſtance of a late miniſter, who by the mere force of cultivating the language beſtowed by the Deity on human kind, as far as he could carry it by his own pains, raiſed himſelf to the ſole direction of affairs in this country: and not only ſo, but the powers of his living voice ſhook diſtant thrones, and made the extremities of the earth to tremble. When it is well known that had the ſame ſentiments been delivered in the language of men; had they been ſent out into the world in a pamphlet; they would probably have produced

duced leſs effects upon the minds of a few readers, than thoſe of ſome hireling writers. And we have many flagrant inſtances in our methodiſt preachers, of the power which words acquire, even the words of fools and madmen, when forcibly uttered by the living voice. And if the language of nature be poſſeſſed of ſuch power, in its preſent neglected and uncultivated ſtate, how immenſe muſt be its force, were it carried to the ſame degree of perfection, that it was amongſt the ancient Greeks and Romans?

Had the Greeks or Romans been bleſt with the light of revelation; had they been poſſeſſed of ſuch a religion, and ſuch a conſtitution as ours, together with ſome diſcoveries which time has produced; they would have carried all the powers belonging to human nature to the utmoſt degree of perfection; and the ſtate of ſociety amongſt them would have approached as nearly to that bliſsful ſtate, to which we are taught to look forwards, a fellowſhip with angels, as the boundaries of the two worlds would permit. And would not this neceſſarily be our caſe, were we poſſeſſed of thoſe articles, in which the Greeks and Romans confeſſedly excelled us? We want only their arts added to our ſciences. Their arts, are eſſentially neceſſary to render the nobleſt diſcoveries in modern philoſophy, practically uſeful to ſociety.

Their

Their arts, are eſſentially neceſſary, to diffuſe thoſe benefits thro' all ranks of people, which ſuch a religion, and ſuch a conſtitution as ours, are in their own nature capable of beſtowing. In ſhort, their arts, are eſſentially neceſſary, to our making a right uſe of all thoſe bleſſings, which Providence has ſhowered down with a more liberal hand, on this country, than on any other in the world. Now they had no arts whatſoever, in which they excelled us, that did not take their riſe, either immediately, or conſequentially, from the pains beſtowed upon the culture of the language of nature, the living ſpeech. What is there wanting then amongſt us, but to apply ourſelves with induſtry to the ſame means, in order to attain the ſame ends?

I know there are few capable of tracing a ſpeculation of this ſort, thro' all its ſteps, ſo as to perceive the juſtneſs of the deduction. But I am now little ſolicitous about what judgment ſhall be paſt upon the theory, ſince the time is approaching of trying it experimentally. A few ſenſible effects produced from practice, will carry more conviction to the bulk of mankind, than a thouſand ſpeculative arguments. It is with true ſatisfaction of heart I hail the approaching day, when all that I have advanced

upon this ſubject, will be put to that teſt. Whoever attended the courſe of lectures during their delivery; or whoever ſhall look at the numerous liſt of ſubſcribers preceding this book, will be convinced that things are now ripe for execution, and that due encouragement will not be wanting to him who ſhall eſtabliſh a ſucceſsful method of teaching the art of Delivery in this country. The conſtant attendance of the ſubſcribers during the courſe; the profound attention with which the lectures were heard; the general ſatisfaction expreſſed by all who were preſent at their delivery; and the many perſonal applications to the author, from thoſe who looked upon themſelves as concerned in the event, either on their own or their children's account, to begin as ſoon as poſſible upon ſome practical plan, in order to anſwer the ends propoſed; ſufficiently confirm the truth of this aſſertion. And with reſpect to numbers, the printed liſt prefixed to this * book will be far from ſhewing the real number of ſubſcribers to the courſe, as many choſe not to ſet down their names, and as ſome of the liſts were accidentally loſt. But when the world is told, that the number of ſubſcribers to this, and a former courſe of the ſame nature, was not

* This liſt was prefixed to the firſt edition of this book, but is now omitted.

leſs

leſs than ſeventeen hundred, and that theſe were all volunteers, as there was not the leaſt ſolicitation uſed on the part of the author to promote the ſubſcription; it will probably be allowed, that ſuch a general, free encouragement, has hardly been given to any ſingle propoſal in this age.

Some may be ſurpriſed to find, ſo few names, of perſons adorned with titles, or dignified by ſtation, in the liſt of ſubſcribers: But they who are acquainted with the ſtate of things for ſome time paſt, will not at all wonder at this, when they are told that the ſubſcription was utterly unſolicited. Voluntary patronage amongſt the great, has long been out of faſhion. It is too frequently the caſe that the nobility, and perſons in high ſtation, model their behaviour by that of the Miniſter; and till within a *very ſhort ſpace*, there has not been an inſtance of *any* Miniſter during the laſt fifty years, who gave the ſmalleſt encouragement to any art or ſcience in this country, to any work of genius or literature; or who countenanced any ſcheme calculated to improve the minds, or better the hearts, of Britiſh ſubjects.

The laſt name mentioned of a patron-Miniſter, is that of the Earl of Oxford in the reign of

Queen Anne; and the laſt deſign he had in hand, for the general good of theſe realms, was, as we are informed by Swift, a plan for correcting, improving, and aſcertaining the Engliſh tongue. A deſign which would probably have taken effect, as Swift alſo informs us, had the Queen lived a year or two longer. Yet, unexecuted as it was, the very intention of ſetting about ſo noble a work, has made his name more generally known and and talked of, and has done him more honour, than all the other actions of his life. Nor was there any article which put his character in ſo high a point of light, as the praiſe which Swift beſtows on him, in the beginning of his letter addreſſed to him upon that head. Tho' the paſſage may be known to moſt readers, yet as it deſerves to be attentively conſidered by all, I ſhall make no apology for inſerting it here.

'What I had the honour to mention to your 'Lordſhip ſome time ago in converſation, was 'not a new thought, juſt then ſtarted by acci-'dent or occaſion, but the reſult of long reflec-'tion, and I have been confirmed in my ſenti-'ments, by the opinion of ſome very judicious 'perſons, with whom I conſulted. They all 'agreed, that nothing would be of greater uſe 'towards the improvement of knowledge and 'politeneſs,

'politeneſs, than ſome effectual method for 'correcting, enlarging and aſcertaining our 'language; and they think it a work very poſ-'ſible to be compaſſed under the protection of 'a Prince, the countenance and encouragement 'of a Miniſtry, and the care of proper perſons 'choſen for ſuch an undertaking. I was glad 'to find your Lordſhip's anſwer in ſo different 'a ſtyle, from what hath commonly been made 'uſe of on ſuch like occaſions, for ſome years 'paſt; '*That all ſuch thoughts muſt be deferred 'to a time of peace:*' A topic which ſome have 'carried ſo far, that they would not have us by 'any means think of preſerving our civil or 'religious conſtitution, becauſe we are engaged 'in a war abroad. It will be among the diſ-'tinguiſhing marks of your miniſtry, my Lord, 'that you had a genius above all ſuch regards; 'and that no reaſonable propoſal for the ho-'nour, the advantage, or the ornament of your 'country, however foreign to your more im-'mediate office, was ever neglected by you.'

What a glorious eulogium of a Britiſh Miniſter does the laſt ſentence contain! How unhappy has it been for this country, that it never ſince could be applied with truth to any of his ſucceſſors! But let it rejoice the heart of every one poſſeſſed of genius and talents

out of the common road; of every one who has any *reasonable proposal to make, for the honour, the advantage, or the ornament of our country*, that we have at last got a Minister, whose conduct, when opportunities offer, will probably entitle him to this eulogium, and who is not likely to neglect any of these points, *however foreign to his more immediate office*. Of which he has already given proofs, during the short time he has been in power, and amongst others, one striking one: That when a plan upon the same subject as that of Swift's was lately laid before him, he, like Lord Oxford, did not make the usual answer, '*That all such thoughts must be deferred to a time of peace*:' But at the very juncture when he was engaged in a greater variety of business, than probably has fallen to the lot of any one Minister; in a most critical situation of affairs, both foreign and domestic; he *made* leisure to examine the plan with care, and declared his intention of giving it all due countenance and encouragement.

Before I quit this subject, I should be guilty of great ingratitude, if I did not acknowledge my obligations to one nobleman: who, when he was accidentally made acquainted with the nature of Mr. Sheridan's undertaking, and had read some of his writings upon that subject,

did

did not wait to be ſolicited, but ſought out the author, honoured him with his countenance, and by more than words encouraged him to proceed in his deſign. It will be hardly neceſſary to acquaint the reader, that this nobleman's title is to be found prefixed to this work.

July 10,
1762.

LECTURE I.

THAT a general inability to read, or ſpeak, with propriety and grace in public, runs thro' the natives of the Britiſh dominions, is acknowledged; it ſhews itſelf in our ſenates and churches, on the bench and at the bar.

That Divine Service in general is not performed with that ſolemnity, diſtinctneſs, and propriety, which the nature of ſuch ſervice demands; nor diſcourſes delivered from the pulpit, with ſuch powers of perſuaſive, or forcible elocution, as alone can make them produce their intended effects, is alſo generally allowed.

In ſhort, that good public reading, or ſpeaking, is one of the rareſt qualities to be found, in a country, where reading and ſpeaking in public, are more generally uſed, than in any other in the world; where the doing them well is a matter of the utmoſt importance to the ſtate, and to ſociety; and where promotion, or honour to individuals, is ſure to attend

tend even a moderate ſhare of merit in thoſe points, is a truth which cannot be denied.

When therefore we reflect, that ſuch powerful motives, as a ſenſe of duty, of honour, and of intereſt, have not ſince the revival of letters (as far as we can judge) produced any improvements in thoſe articles; we ſhould be apt at firſt view to imagine, that the inhabitants of theſe countries are born under ſome natural incapacity, of arriving at any degree of excellence, in the great article of delivery: and that our Creator, when he furniſhed us liberally with all the intellectual powers, did not in ſuitable proportions ſupply the means of diſplaying thoſe powers to our fellow-creatures.

But as we have never been without a few inſtances of men, who by ſome lucky circumſtance in their early culture, and by taking proper pains themſelves to improve their talents for elocution, have raiſed great admiration in their hearers, of their abilities in public ſpeaking, we have ſo many proofs at leaſt, that we are under no national curſe of that ſort. And as we have daily demonſtration in private life, that moſt people ſpeak juſtly, and forcibly in company, upon topics wherein they are nearly intereſted, we may conclude with certainty, that there are no natural impediments in their way, to do the ſame in public alſo.

If

If any ſtranger in China, obſerving the uncommon ſmallneſs of feet in all the women; or, in ſome ſavage countries, the uncouth ſhape of the head in whole nations of Barbarians, ſome formed into a conical figure like that of a ſugar-loaf, others flattened at the top and rendered ſquare; ſhould not be acquainted with the cauſes of theſe extraordinary appearances, he would be apt to conclude that they were defects and blemiſhes of nature. But when he ſhould be told, that the feet of the former were bound in the tighteſt manner with bandages from childhood, on purpoſe to prevent their growth; and the ſkulls of the latter, from the hour of the infant's birth, whilſt yet they were uncloſed, and yielded to impreſſion, were induſtriouſly moulded into thoſe forms, from a miſtaken idea of beauty; how would he wonder at the folly of nations, that could perſevere in ſuch abſurd cuſtoms?

Yet much more to be wondered at, would the conduct of a civilized people be, who ſhould perſevere in a cuſtom far more fatal; that of binding up and contracting from early childhood, and moulding into unnatural forms, the faculties of ſpeech, which are amongſt the moſt noble, uſeful, and ornamental, that are poſſeſſed by man; by which he is in a more eſpecial manner diſtinguiſhed from brutes; and

without

without the perfect uſe of which, he cannot, in many caſes, as he ought, diſcharge his duty to his neighbour, his country, or his God.

If it can be proved that we are under the dominion of ſuch a cuſtom, the cauſe of the general defect complained of will be apparent: and it muſt be obvious that whilſt the influence of that cuſtom continues, it muſt produce the ſame effects, and no amendment is to be expected.

That a general deficiency in point of public reading and ſpeaking, prevails in theſe countries, is allowed. This deficiency muſt ariſe either from natural or artificial cauſes. That there are no natural impediments in our way, has been proved; conſequently they muſt be artificial. What thoſe artificial impediments are, which prevent our making a progreſs towards perfection in thoſe eſſential articles, is the point now to be enquired into.

There cannot be a better clue to guide us to the ſource of the malady complained of, than a due attention to an obſervation before made: 'That there are few perſons, who, in 'private company, do not deliver their ſen-'timents with propriety and force in their 'manner, whenever they ſpeak in earneſt.' Conſequently here is a ſure ſtandard fixed for propriety and force in public ſpeaking; which

is,

is, only to make uſe of the ſame manner in the one, as in the other. And this, men certainly would do, if left to themſelves; and if early pains were not taken, to ſubſtitute an artificial method, in the room of that which is natural.

Of this there could not be a ſtronger proof given, than if upon trial it were found, that after a perſon had delivered his extemporaneous thoughts upon a point in which he was intereſted, with due force of emphaſis, properly varied tones, juſt cadences and pauſes, accompanied with ſuitable geſture, and expreſſive looks, the ſame individual words which he had uttered were written down, and given to him to read; if in that caſe, I ſay, it ſhould be found that he would change his whole manner; ſo that neither emphaſes, tones, or cadences ſhould be the ſame; but in their room, he ſhould ſubſtitute ſuch as he was taught to read with; and that all geſture, and expreſſion of countenance ſhould vaniſh. And if this ſhould be the caſe when a man reads his own ſentiments, (as indeed in general none read worſe than authors) how much leſs likely is he to do juſtice to the ſentiments of others?

Here then is to be found the true ſource of the bad manner of reading and ſpeaking in public, that ſo generally prevails: which is, that we are taught to read in a different way,

with

with different tones and cadences, from thoſe which we uſe in ſpeaking; and this artificial manner, is uſed inſtead of the natural one, in all recitals and repetitions at ſchool, as well as in reading.

When therefore we conſider that the fineſt artificial tones in the world, and the moſt muſical cadences can never ſtand in the place, or anſwer the ends, of ſuch as are natural, or appear ſo by being always uſed in diſcourſe; as may be ſeen by comparing the Italian recitative in operas, with a well-acted ſcene in one of our plays; what are we to expect from ſuch artificial tones, as are diſcordant inſtead of being harmonious? or of ſuch a method of ſpeaking introduced, as ſhall make uſe only of a few of thoſe bad tones and cadences to expreſs all manner of things; inſtead of an endleſs variety, furniſhed by nature or cuſtom, to manifeſt and communicate not only all the *ideas* which paſs in the mind, but alſo all its operations, affections, and paſſions? Is it to be wondered at that ſuch an unnatural manner of delivery, ſhould either produce but little effect in the hearers, or excite diſguſt?

When we reflect that the end of public ſpeaking is perſuaſion, (for the view of every one who harangues in public is to bring his hearers into his way of thinking); and that in order

order to perſuade others to the belief of any point, it muſt firſt appear, that the perſon who attempts it is firmly perſuaded of the truth of it himſelf; how can we ſuppoſe it poſſible that he ſhould effect this, unleſs he delivers himſelf in the manner which is always uſed by perſons who ſpeak in earneſt? How ſhall his words paſs for the words of truth, when they bear not its ſtamp?

Till therefore a way ſhall be found out to counteract for the preſent, and deſtroy hereafter, the bad cuſtom which has given riſe to this unnatural manner of reading and ſpeaking, we ſhall in vain hope, for the many excellent effects, which might be produced by good elocution, in a country, where there is ſuch an abſolute neceſſity for it, to the ſupport of our conſtitution, both in church, and ſtate.

I ſhall therefore conſider, in the firſt place, how the power of this cuſtom may be counteracted, for the immediate relief of ſuch as are labouring under the effects of its bad influence; and afterwards ſhew how it may be wholly ſubverted; ſo that the riſing, and future generations may no longer be tainted by it. As the firſt of theſe is the point in which my hearers are more immediately concerned, I ſhall chiefly in the preſent courſe dwell upon that.

In

In order to counteract and get the better of any bad habit, it is neceſſary in the firſt place, that the perſon who is under its influence, ſhould be *conſcious* that he is ſo; in the ſecond, that he ſhould know how, and by what means this bad habit grew upon him, that he may know how to avoid thoſe means, and unlearn what was faulty; which is the firſt neceſſary ſtep towards improvement.

Sincerum eſt niſi vas quodcunque infundis aceſcit.

And laſtly, that he ſhould be made acquainted with the method of attaining what is right, in order that a good habit may ſucceed to a bad one. For as habit only can get the better of habit, and a man when he has parted with one manner, muſt neceſſarily acquire another; unleſs he knows what is right, he may only change one bad manner for another, or perhaps for one which is worſe.

To accompliſh theſe points, I ſhall firſt lay open the ſources of our errours and faults in the art of reading; partly ariſing from the unſkilfulneſs of maſters, and partly from defects and imperfections in the very art of writing itſelf.

And then, I ſhall ſhew how, and by what means, it may be in the power of every one

to

to acquire a right manner, by proper pains and practice.

Before I can make theſe points clear, it will be neceſſary to recollect, that we have in uſe two different kinds of language, which have no ſort of affinity between them, but what cuſtom has eſtabliſhed; and which are communicated thro' different organs: the one thro' the eye, by means of written characters; the other, thro' the ear, by means of articulate ſounds and tones. But theſe two kinds of language are ſo early in life aſſociated, that it is difficult ever after to ſeparate them; or not to ſuppoſe that there is ſome kind of natural connection between them. And yet it is a matter of importance to us, always to bear in mind, that there is no ſort of affinity between them, but what ariſes from an habitual aſſociation of ideas. Tho' we cannot ſo eaſily ſeparate them in our own minds, yet when we come to conſider them in relation to others, we ſee clearly enough their utter independence of each other; as is obvious in the caſe of men born blind, or deaf; the former of whom may be perfect maſters of the language which is ſpoken, and the latter of that which is written; tho' neither of them can form an idea of the other's language, or of the manner, by which a communication of thoughts may be made thro' the ſenſe which

they want. And indeed any communication of that ſort, between the deaf and the blind, is impoſſible.

All men who are wholly illiterate, are in the ſame circumſtances with regard to language, as they who are born blind. And as they have no conception of words, independent of ſounds, ſo cannot they comprehend how it is poſſible for them to be made viſible to the eye; and therefore reading, in its infancy, was looked upon as a ſupernatural gift; and the few who were maſters of that art, conſidered by the vulgar in the light of magicians. On the other hand, they who are born deaf, when taught to read, have no other ideas of words, but what ariſe from their viſible marks; and can as little conceive, how it is poſſible, that they ſhould be made obvious to any other ſenſe, but that of ſeeing.

Hence it comes to paſs, that the man wholly illiterate, who has no other ideas of language, but what he has obtained thro' his ear, always uſes a variety of tones in ſpeaking, ſuch as are cuſtomary in his country; according to the ſenſe of the words, or the emotions of his mind. On the contrary, the deaf man, when taught to ſpeak, (as many have been) always delivers his words in one uniform tone, without the leaſt variation. In an intermediate ſtate be-

tween theſe, the reading men, in proportion to the attention which they give, to the one kind of language or the other, either approach nearer to the monotony of the deaf man, or the variety of the illiterate. On this account it is, that the moſt bookiſh men are generally remarkable for the worſt delivery: as reading therefore by means of the preſs, is become almoſt univerſal amongſt us; and as the chief errours and defects of our delivery, ariſe from a faulty manner of reading; there cannot be a matter of more importance, than to explain fully, how this faulty manner, muſt neceſſarily prevail, not only from the unſkilfulneſs of maſters, but alſo from the imperfect ſtate of the art of writing itſelf, until a proper remedy be found.

For this end, let us conſider the purpoſes which may be anſwered by reading. They are chiefly three. The acquiſition of knowledge; the aſſiſting the memory to treaſure up this knowledge; or the communicating it to others. The firſt two, may be done by ſilent reading; the laſt requires reading aloud. Let us now examine how far the art of writing, (under which head I include printing,) is in its preſent ſtate fitted to anſwer the ſeveral purpoſes, and how far, and in what reſpects it is deficient.

With regard to the firſt point, that of con-

veying knowledge, it is plain enough, that the written language is in a ſufficient ſtate of perfection, as any one who is once maſter of it, can read an author who writes clearly, ſo as fully to comprehend his meaning, with almoſt the ſame celerity that his eye can take in the words. And the ſame muſt alſo be allowed with regard to the ſecond uſe of written language, that of aſſiſting the memory. To anſwer theſe two neceſſary ends there has been ſufficient care taken in the ſtructure of written language; but as the third, that of reading aloud to others, was by no means a neceſſary object; on the contrary, as every purpoſe to which that is applied, might be much better anſwered by giving due attention to the ſecond uſe of writing, that of imprinting words on the memory, ſo as that they might be delivered without any uſe of notes, there has been no manner of regard paid to it in the whole art of writing; which does not contain one ſingle viſible mark, that can give us any aſſiſtance, in the moſt important articles of a good delivery, as I ſhall preſently ſhew.

The Greeks and Romans made uſe of this art only to anſwer the two firſt purpoſes; that of ſilent reading, and that of aſſiſting the memory; for we never hear of its being uſed amongſt them in public reading, as all their

ſtudied

ſtudied orations, poems, &c. were recited from memory; conſequently, they had no occaſion to carry the art of writing farther than was neceſſary to anſwer thoſe ends. When therefore we, who have taken the model of our written language from them, would apply it to a third uſe, for which it never was intended, and to which it is not by any means adapted in its nature, ſhall we be ſurpriſed if it fails to anſwer that end, and wonder that reading aloud ſhould in general be ſo ill performed?

To prove that our written language is by no means calculated to anſwer this third purpoſe, of reading aloud, it will be only neceſſary to ſhew, that it contains no viſible marks, of articles, which are the moſt important of all others, to a juſt delivery. A juſt delivery conſiſts in a diſtinct articulation of words, pronounced in proper tones, ſuitably varied to the ſenſe, and the emotions of the mind; with due obſervation of accent; of emphaſis, in its ſeveral gradations; of reſts or pauſes of the voice, in proper places and well-meaſured degrees of time; and the whole accompanied with expreſſive looks, and ſignificant geſture. Now of all theſe ingredients, not one of which can be ſpared from a good delivery, there are but two, that are at all regarded in the art of writing; and theſe are, articulate ſounds or words, which

are marked by letters; and ſtops, or pauſes of the voice, which are marked by little figures and tittles. And even in theſe points, much greater regard, has been paid to the two firſt uſes of written language than to the laſt; to the ſilent reader, than to him who is to read aloud to others; as may be ſeen by examining, in the firſt inſtance, in what manner words are ſpelt; in which the derivation and meaning of the words is often more conſidered, than any direction of the proper ſounds reſulting from the arrangement of the letters. In this reſpect indeed, we are ſo exceedingly looſe and irregular, that even when no end can be anſwered by it, the words in general, as preſented to the eye, would be ſo far from producing the true ſounds, that if they were pronounced exactly as they are written, we ſhould not know them to be of our language. And as to the ſecond article, that of points or ſtops, I ſhall preſently ſhew that they are by no means fitted to the natural reſts and pauſes of diſcourſe; and, as they are managed, have proved the chief cauſe of ſome of our greateſt imperfections in reading. But with reſpect to the other articles of tones, accent, emphaſis, and geſture, there are no viſible marks to ſerve as guides in theſe. And as theſe latter, muſt be allowed to be the ſources, of every thing which is pleaſurable,

ſurable, or forcible in delivery; and to contain in them, all the powers of ſtrongly impreſſing the mind, captivating the fancy, rouſing the paſſions, and delighting the ear; it muſt alſo be allowed, that the moſt eſſential articles to a good delivery, have been wholly left out of the graphic art.

It may be ſaid, that there is no occaſion to have any marks for theſe, as the view of the words on paper, will excite in the mind the ideas for which they ſtand; and of courſe, all the acceſſary circumſtances of delivery, which are uſually aſſociated with thoſe ideas in the mind: and that as ſoon as we perceive by the help of the eye, the full meaning and import of any ſentence, we ſhall be able to expreſs that meaning to others, in the ſame manner, and with the ſame propriety and force, as if it proceeded from the immediate ſentiments of our own minds. It were to be wiſhed indeed that this aſſertion could be made good, for in that caſe, there would be few bad readers in the world; but the abundance of thoſe, which are every where to be found, ſufficiently refutes this opinion. And indeed by examining the proceſs of ſuch, as are moſt expert in the art of reading, we ſhall be fully convinced that the opinion is erroneous: every one of whom will allow, that he cannot deliver any

piece of written compoſition, ſo well at ſight, or on the firſt reading, as on the ſecond; nor on the ſecond, as on the third: and ſo he continues improving in his manner, every time, as the words grow more familiar to him. Nay he will allow that he cannot approach nearly to the manner of delivering them, with the ſame propriety and force, as he would his own ſentiments, till they as it were become his own, by being ſo perfectly impreſſed on the memory, that the mind may be wholly at liberty to attend only to the delivery; without being called off to another office from any difficulty of recollection. The leſs the mind is diſtracted by attention to different operations, the more it can collect all its vigour to diſplay any one. We may every day ſee that the perſon who attempts to repeat things which he has not perfectly by heart, has his faculties ſo abſorbed in the act of recollection, that he cannot attend to the manner of his reciting, which becomes proportionally defective. And in extemporaneous ſpeaking, they who have a fluency of expreſſion, and an eaſy command of words, have proportional advantages in point of delivery, over thoſe who are obliged to heſitate, ſtop, and ſuſpend their diſcourſe, whilſt the mind is, as it were, ſent out of the way, upon another office, that of ſearching for proper words

words and phraſes, which ought to have been ready at a call.

Were it requiſite to enter into a philoſophical examination of the nature of reading, it would appear, that there are ſo many, and ſuch various acts of the mind, neceſſary to perform that office, as would ſufficiently ſhew us, that it is impoſſible ſuch a portion of attention can be given to the manner of delivery, as it ought to have, to anſwer its end, if we conſider it as the ſubſtitute of extemporaneous ſpeaking. For in that caſe, as it is neceſſary that it ſhould be performed in the ſame ſpace of time as the other, how is it poſſible this can be done, when there are ſo many more actions of the mind, requiſite to the one, than to the other? And tho' we ſhould allow, that thro' ſkill and habit, a reader, by the quick motion of his eye, may comprehend the full meaning and import of the words, and even have juſt ideas excited, of the manner in which they ought to be delivered, in the ſame ſpace of time only, that would be taken up in ſpeaking thoſe words, yet it by no means follows that his execution ſhould anſwer his conceptions, or that the exact tones, and other accompaniments of diſcourſe, ſhould be ready at his will. For tho' they ſpontaneouſly ſtart forth, when we ſpeak our own conceptions, being the immediate reſult of feeling;

yet, as we are not ſo eaſily intereſted in the ſentiments of others, and as feeling muſt in a great meaſure be blunted or deſtroyed, by the attention which the mind is obliged to give to ſo many different points, in the act of reading; ſo, muſt we ſuppoſe, that the beſt reading, muſt fall ſhort of the power of ſpeaking, in all articles which depend upon feeling. And of this a well-known proof has already been given, in the inſtance of any good reader, who in proportion as his attention is taken off from the words, by making them familiar to him, or fixing them in his memory; and his feeling increaſed, by adopting the ſentiments, is able to deliver them in a manner approaching nearer to that which he would uſe if they were his own.

Of this we have ſufficient examples in comedians; whoſe profeſſion it is, to ſpeak from memory, the ſentiments of others; and yet to deliver them, as if they were the reſult of their own immediate feeling. But it is not at the firſt, ſecond, third, or even twentieth reading of their parts, that they are able to hit upon the exact manner, in which the words are to be delivered; they muſt firſt have them perfectly fixed in their memories; and even then, it is only by repeated trials, and conſtant practice in rehearſals, that they are able to aſſoci-

ate to them, the juſt tones, looks, and geſtures, that ought naturally to accompany them. Indeed there is nothing could put the difficulty of reading properly, in a ſtronger light to any man, than his attempting to read aloud a ſcene of a comedy; in which, tho' there are no tones to be uſed, but what are known to him, and which he acknowledges as ſuch, when uſed by others, yet can he by no means command them at his pleaſure; and he muſt be obliged to own, that to conceive, and to execute, are two different things: the firſt may ariſe from ſtudy and obſervation, the laſt, muſt be the effect of practice.

That the great difficulty of reading with propriety, and in ſuitably varied tones and cadences, ariſes from the want of ſufficient ſigns and marks, in the art of writing, to point them out; and were there but a ſufficient number of thoſe marks, reading juſtly at ſight, might be rendered almoſt as eaſy and as certain, as ſinging at ſight, is a matter which might unqueſtionably be proved, were it to be attended by any advantage. But as that would be merely a ſpeculative point, inaſmuch as there is little likelihood that any change will be made in the art of writing, it will be more immediately to the purpoſe, to enquire how the art of *reading* may be *improved*, whilſt that of *writing* continues in its *preſent* ſtate.

Hitherto

Hitherto I have conſidered the difficulty of reading well, aloud, as ariſing from its own nature only, and the imperfect ſtate of the written language amongſt us, which does not ſeem by any means calculated to anſwer that end. I have ſhewn how hard, nay impracticable it is, to arrive at due perfection in that point, even on a ſuppoſition that the readers have all proper qualifications for the taſk, and ſhould not be under the influence of any falſe rules, or bad habits. But as that is not the caſe of one reader in ten thouſand, I ſhall now lay open the more *general* ſource of that impropriety and badneſs of reading which is ſo prevalent.

Beſide the ignorance of maſters who teach the firſt rudiments of reading, and the want of ſkill, or negligence in that article, of thoſe who teach the learned languages; beſide the erroneous manner, which the untutored pupils fall into, thro' the want of early attention in maſters, to correct ſmall faults in the beginning, which increaſe and gain ſtrength with years; beſide bad habits contracted from imitation of particular perſons, or the contagion of example, from a general prevalence, of a certain tone or chant in reading or reciting, peculiar to each ſchool, and regularly tranſmitted from one generation of boys to another: beſide all theſe, which are fruitful ſources of vicious elocution,

there

there is one fundamental errour, in the method univerſally uſed in teaching to read, which at firſt gives a wrong bias, and leads us ever after blindfold from the right path, under the guidance of a falſe rule.

It was before obſerved, that we have no viſible marks in writing, but for words, and pauſes or reſts of the voice. With regard to words, it was ſhewn that they are more calculated, from the manner in which they are ſpelt, for the uſe of the ſilent reader, than for the aſſiſtance of him that reads aloud. But tho', on account of the manner of ſpelling words, the difficulty of learning to read them at ſight is increaſed, and for that reaſon, more time and pains are required, than would otherwiſe be neceſſary; yet, by time and pains, we find that the point is generally accompliſhed; and we come by habit, to acknowledge words, whoſe ſounds we are pre-acquainted with, at ſight, and to give them their juſt pronunciation, however ill adapted, the order of the letters which compoſe ſuch words, may ſeem, to produce ſuch ſounds. This branch of reading, has been brought to perfection, from neceſſity; for were words to be pronounced as they are ſpelt, and not according to the manner uſed in diſcourſe, they could not be known or underſtood; and all

paſſages

paſſages ſo read muſt appear to be nothing but jargon. But with regard to the other article of written language, I mean the viſible marks of the pauſes and reſts of the voice, the maſters have not only been more negligent in perfecting pupils in the right uſe of theſe, but in their method of teaching, have laid down ſome falſe rules, under the influence of which, it is impoſſible that any one can read naturally. In the firſt place it is not known, (tho' it be certainly true) that the marks for pauſes and ſtops in writing, are not more accurate, with regard to pointing out ſuch as are uſed in diſcourſe, than the words are, by the ſpelling, to point out their ſound; conſequently it ought to be the care of a maſter, in the one caſe, as well as the other, to ſhew wherein the difference conſiſts; and to ſupply by oral inſtruction, and habit, any deficiency or errour which may be in the art of writing, with reſpect to pointing, as well as with regard to ſpelling. Indeed the uſe of pointing, as was before obſerved with regard to ſpelling, is much more calculated to aſſiſt the ſilent reader, in readily comprehending the meaning of ſentences, than in obſerving the due proportions of time, in reading aloud. But beſide that the art of pointing, has not been managed in ſuch a way, as to make it anſwer, what ought to be its chief end, it has an office

aſſigned

aſſigned it quite foreign to its nature, and which it is in no ſhape fitted to diſcharge; for whereas it muſt be apparent that the art of pointing in its preſent ſtate, ought to have reference to nothing, but either the grammatical conſtruction of ſentences, or the different proportions of pauſes in point of time; thro' want of others, the maſters have made uſe of the ſtops as marks of tones alſo. How little fitted they are to anſwer this end, we may judge, by conſidering that the tones preceding pauſes and reſts in diſcourſe, are exceedingly numerous, and various, according to the ſenſe of the words, the emotions of the mind, or the exertions of fancy; each of which would require a diſtinct mark, and cannot be repreſented by ſo ſmall a number as four or five, which are uſed as ſtops. The maſters therefore, have taken a ſhort cut, to give what they call proper tones to their pupils in reading, by annexing artificial tones to the ſtops, which no way correſpond to thoſe which are uſed in diſcourſe; and which may juſtly be called the reading tones, in oppoſition to thoſe of the ſpeaking kind. Of theſe tones in general there are but two uſed; one which marks that the ſenſe is not completed; another, which ſhews that the ſentence is cloſed. For they have not even invented ſo many tones, as there are viſible marks of pauſes. The com-

ma,

ma, ſemicolon, and colon, are pronounced in the ſame tone; and only differ in point of time, as two or three to one; whilſt the full ſtop is marked by a different tone. As the one conſiſts in an uniform elevation, and the other in an uniform depreſſion of the voice, we need no longer be at a loſs, to account for that diſagreeable monotony, which ſo generally prevails in reading; and which neceſſarily defeats every purpoſe of book-delivery, as the attention of all auditors muſt, not only ſoon be wearied and deſtroyed by it, but in ſuch as have any taſte, it muſt occaſion the higheſt diſguſt.

Here then is the chief ſource laid open of that unnatural manner of reading which ſo univerſally prevails; and unleſs a perſon knows this, he can never amend his errour; for the ſight of the ſtops, as naturally excites the tones which he was early taught to aſſociate with them, as the ſight of the words excites their pronunciation; and thus the habit of reading, will only ſerve to confirm him, in the faulty manner which he has acquired. In this caſe, we may apply to reading, what Monteſquieu has obſerved of the laws; where he ſays, 'There are two ſorts of corruption, one, when 'men do not obſerve the laws, the other, when 'they are corrupted by the laws: an incurable 'evil, becauſe it is in the very remedy itſelf.'

And

And indeed as in that caſe, the evil muſt be incurable, whilſt the influence of the laws remains; ſo in the other, till the falſe rules are abrogated, and juſt ones eſtabliſhed in their room, there can be no hopes of amendment. It muſt be obvious to the ſlighteſt enquiry, that the moſt effectual method of introducing a general good manner of reading, would be the giving due encouragement, to a ſufficient number of ſkilful maſters, to teach that art, by a well-digeſted ſyſtem of rules, according to the practice of the ancients; inſtead of leaving it to old women, or the loweſt and moſt ignorant of mankind in the firſt rudiments, or to ſuch as do not conſider it as part of their province, and who indeed in general know not how to teach it; which is the caſe in moſt grammar ſchools: the conſequence of which has been, that moſt boys, are either perverted by falſe rules, or having no rules to guide them, take up any manner which chance throws in their way, or imperceptibly yield to the influence of bad example.

But as a ſcheme of this kind, would be of benefit only to the riſing generation, and as my preſent object is, the improvement of ſuch as are more advanced in life, I ſhall, in the progreſs of this courſe, endeavour to point out a method, by which the adult may get the better

of

of bad habits, and at the ſame time lay down ſuch rules to guide them, in acquiring a juſt and natural delivery, as will enable them to compaſs their end, provided they take ſuitable pains; and afterwards proceed in order, to pronunciation, accent, emphaſis, pauſes or ſtops, pitch and management of the voice, tones and geſture; which will comprehend the whole of what I have to offer on that ſubject.

LECTURE

LECTURE II.

BEFORE I examine the ſeveral parts of elocution, it will be neceſſary to define the meaning of the term.

Elocution is the juſt and graceful management of the voice, countenance, and geſture, in ſpeaking.

Under this head, I ſhall conſider every thing neceſſary to a good delivery. I ſhall treat of the voice and geſture ſeparately, and include what reſpects the countenance in the latter article. And firſt of the voice, ſo far as the organs of ſpeech are concerned.

A good delivery, in this ſenſe of the word, depends upon a due attention to the following articles.

Articulation: Pronunciation: Accent: Emphaſis: Tones or Notes of the ſpeaking voice: Pauſes or Stops: Key or Pitch, and Management of the voice.

Of each of theſe in their order. And firſt of

ARTICULATION.

A good articulation, conſiſts, in giving every letter in a ſyllable, its due proportion of ſound, according to the moſt approved cuſtom of pronouncing it; and in making ſuch a diſtinction, between the ſyllables, of which words are compoſed, that the ear ſhall without difficulty acknowledge their number; and perceive at once, to which ſyllable each letter belongs. Where theſe points are not obſerved, the articulation is proportionally defective.

A good articulation is to the ear, in ſpeaking, what a fair and regular hand is to the eye, in writing; and exactneſs in ſounding the words rightly, correſponds to propriety in ſpelling; in both caſes, the underſtanding can comprehend what is offered to it, with eaſe and quickneſs, and without being obliged to have recourſe to painful attention. Fairneſs and exactneſs of hand is not thought a neceſſary qualification of a gentleman; and is expected only from writing-maſters and clerks. Nor is it a diſgrace to him, even to write ſuch a hand, as is ſcarcely legible. The more irregular the hand is, the more time and pains indeed it will coſt the reader, to make out the words; but then he may do this at his leiſure, as the marks

are

are permanent. With regard to articulation, in which the marks of the words vaniſh as they are ſpoken, this is not the caſe; and therefore it ſhould be ſo diſtinct, that the hearer, may with eaſe, go along with the ſpeaker, at the ſame pace. For if he ſhould ſtop, to ſet any thing right, that is amiſs in the ſpeaker, whilſt his attention is employed on that point, he loſes irrecoverably, all that is ſaid during that time. It is therefore in itſelf, a matter much more eſſentially neceſſary, that a ſpeaker, ſhould have a clear and diſtinct articulation, than that a writer ſhould be maſter of a good hand.

But it is a diſgrace to a gentleman, to be guilty of falſe ſpelling, either by omitting, changing, or adding letters contrary to cuſtom; and yet it ſhall be no diſgrace to omit letters, or even ſyllables in ſpeaking, and to huddle his words ſo together, as to render them utterly unintelligible. Yet ſurely, exactneſs in the latter, is a point of much more importance than in the former article, in whatever light we view it. The writing of a gentleman is ſubmitted but to one reader at a time; who may examine it at his leiſure, ſupply any defects of orthography, and decypher the meaning, tho' the characters be ever ſo irregular. But the words of one who ſpeaks in public, whether

delivered, or read from notes, may be, at one and the ſame time, addreſſed to many hundred hearers; who muſt loſe the benefit or purpoſed end of the diſcourſe, in proportion as it is indiſtinctly pronounced.

The reaſon of the unequal judgment paſt by mankind in this caſe is, that written language is taught by rule, and it is thought a ſhame for any one, to tranſgreſs the known rules of an art, in which he has been inſtructed. But ſpoken language is not regularly taught, but is left to chance, imitation, and early habit: and therefore like all other things left to chance, or unſettled principles, is liable to innumerable irregularities and defects. And in this caſe, mankind reciprocally claim, and allow indulgence to each other. That this is the true reaſon, will be evident from this conſideration; that amongſt the Greeks and Romans, where ſpeaking was regularly taught, the ſmalleſt errour committed in pronouncing, was equally diſgraceful in men, as falſe ſpelling is with us.

Hence it comes to paſs that faults in articulation, early contracted, are ſuffered to gain ſtrength by habit, and to grow ſo inveterate by time, as to be incurable; partly thro' want of attention to the point in early years; and partly thro' want of ſkilful perſons to remedy the evil after it has been ſuffered to take root.

Parents

Parents do not think it neceſſary, to aſſiſt their infants, in their firſt attempts to articulate words; or to make them proceed regularly, in the formation of ſuch ſounds only, as are moſt eaſy, and require leaſt exertion of the organs; but by ſuffering them to try to pronounce any words whatſoever, or even often urging them to ſpeak ſuch as are too difficult, they give a wrong bias to their weak tender organs, which it would require much pains to ſet right. Hence often ariſes ſtuttering, liſping, and a total inability to pronounce certain letters. The child being urged to utter a ſound, which he finds either difficult, or impoſſible, of courſe heſitates, or ſubſtitutes another letter of more eaſy pronunciation in the room; or wholly omits it, and only pronounces the remaining letters of the word; and this he afterwards does habitually, never uſing any endeavours of his own, to alter a pronunciation which he finds eaſy to himſelf. The parent, by being accuſtomed to it, underſtands perfectly the child's meaning, in this faulty manner of pronouncing; and too often, far from endeavouring to correct it, encourages him to proceed in it, by talking to him in his own childiſh way; for which he acquires a ſort of fondneſs, accounting the blemiſh a prettineſs.

The firſt maſter, (or rather miſtreſs, as this charge is generally conſigned to old women) into whoſe hands he is put to learn to read, is utterly ignorant of all rules, with regard to the art of ſpeaking, or pronunciation. Theſe miſerable drudges profeſs only to teach the written alphabet, and to ſpell and put ſyllables together properly as they are uſually written. But if a boy brings any impediment with him; if he ſtutters, liſps, or is defective in the pronunciation of any letter, they neither profeſs nor know how, to cure any of theſe; to conceal their ignorance, they call them natural impediments, or defects in the organs of ſpeech, and the child is permitted to go on in his own way, as incurable.

When he is ſent to the Latin ſchool, the office of the maſter there, is not to teach him to articulate, in which point he expects that he ſhould come ready prepared to him. He thinks his duty diſcharged, if he makes him underſtand Latin and Greek well, and write correct exerciſes. The art of delivery is not part of his province; in which it is highly probable, that he is not only utterly unſkilled, but very defective himſelf.

Thus a vitious articulation, caught perhaps from a nurſe, or favourite ſervant, often infects a man's diſcourſe thro' life.

The

The examples of liſping and ſtammering, are frequent; and the inability to pronounce certain letters much more ſo. Smaller defects in articulation, are ſo general, that they paſs unnoticed.

I dare boldly affirm, that of the multitude of inſtances which offer, of a vitiated articulation, there is not one in a thouſand, which proceeds from any natural defect or impediment. Of this point I had many proofs in the ſchool where I received my firſt rudiments of learning; and where the maſter made pronunciation a chief object of his attention; in which I never knew, a ſingle inſtance, of his failing to cure, ſuch boys as came to him with any defects of that kind; tho' there were numbers, who liſped or ſtuttered to a great degree, on their firſt entrance into the ſchool; or who were utterly unable to pronounce ſome letters, and others very indiſtinctly.

When Demoſthenes firſt ſpoke in public, it was objected to him that he could not even pronounce the firſt letter of his art, *Rhetoric*; and to this day people are told that this was a natural defect in his organs: but had that been the caſe, it would have been impoſſible that he ſhould have ever got the better of it; which we are told he did, by indefatigable pains, even a long time after he had arrived at the age of

manhood. So that it was clearly owing to early bad habit, and to the want of due pains, in correcting it in time. And indeed we are alſo told, that thro' the avarice of his guardians, this cuſtomary, and, as it was then thought, neceſſary branch of education had been omitted.

The letter *R* is very indiſtinctly pronounced by many; nay in ſeveral of the Northern counties of England, there are ſcarce any of the inhabitants, who can pronounce it at all. Yet it would be ſtrange to ſuppoſe, that all thoſe people, ſhould be ſo unfortunately diſtinguiſhed, from the reſt of the natives of this iſland, as to be born with any peculiar defect in their organs; when the matter is ſo plainly to be accounted for, upon the principle of imitation, and habit.

I have dwelt the longer on this head, becauſe moſt defects and imperfections, in the other articles of delivery, proceed from the ſame ſource, and are curable only by the ſame means. As alſo becauſe good articulation is the foundation of a good delivery, in the ſame manner as the ſounding the ſimple notes in muſic with exactneſs, is the foundation of good ſinging.

The groſſer faults of articulation, ſuch as ſtuttering, heſitation, liſping, and inability to pronounce certain letters, can never be cured by

precept

precept alone; theſe require the conſtant aid of a perſon, ſkilled in the cauſes of thoſe faults; who by teaching each individual how to uſe the organs of ſpeech rightly, and by ſhewing him the proper poſition of the tongue, lips, &c. may gradually bring him to a juſt articulation. I ſhall confine myſelf to the more general faults; which tho' leſs obſerved, on account of their frequency, and their not being ſo obvious as the others, do nevertheleſs ſo ſpoil and corrupt delivery, as to make it diſagreeable to the ear, and irkſome to the underſtanding.

The firſt, and moſt eſſential point in articulation, is diſtinctneſs; and therefore its oppoſite is the greateſt fault. Indiſtinctneſs, to a certain degree, renders the ſpeaker unintelligible; or demands a more than ordinary attention, which is always painful to the hearer. The chief ſource of indiſtinctneſs, is too great precipitancy of ſpeech. And this takes its riſe in England, chiefly from a bad method of teaching boys to read. As the principal object of the maſter, is to make boys perfectly acquainted with written words, ſo as to acknowledge them at ſight, and give them a ready utterance; the boy, who at firſt is ſlow in knowing the words, is ſlow in uttering them; but as he advances in knowledge, he mends his pace; and not being taught the true beauty, and propriety

priety of reading, he thinks all excellence lies in the quickneſs and rapidity, with which he is able to do it. The prize to boys, who have made any proficiency in reading, ſeems to be deſtined to the ſwift; they ſet out at a gallop, and continue their ſpeed to the end, without regarding how many letters or ſyllables they drop by the way; or how many words they juſtle into one another. This habit of reading, is often transferred into their diſcourſe; and is but too frequently confirmed at the Latin ſchools, where the maſters, in general, having no points in view, but to make their ſcholars repeat their leſſons by heart, or conſtrue them in ſuch a way, as to ſhew that they underſtand them, care not how haſtily theſe exerciſes are done; or rather indeed, are obliged to urge them to a ſpeedy manner of doing them, otherwiſe, it would be impoſſible, to get through the number of boys they have to teach. This bad habit afterwards gathers ſtrength, becauſe the boys are neither conſcious of their own defects, nor receive any intimation of them from others. Nor do they ſuddenly find any diſadvantages ariſing, from ſuch imperfect utterance. For their maſters, companions, and relations, by being uſed to their manner, underſtand them perfectly; in the ſame way as the prattle of children is underſtood by their

parents

parents and nurſes; or as a very bad hand is read by thoſe who are accuſtomed to it. Such blemiſhes and defects, are obvious only to ſtrangers, and they in good manners will not mention them. Thus the evil remains irremediable thro' life.

It muſt be evident that the putting any conſtraint on the organs of ſpeech, or urging them to a more rapid action than they can eaſily perform in their tender ſtate, muſt be productive of indiſtinctneſs in utterance; for in that caſe, the children muſt either drop ſome letters, or give them fainter ſounds than they ſhould have. And as ſome letters, are in their own nature more difficult of pronunciation, than others, and ſtill more ſo in their different combinations, when they form ſyllables, it is in thoſe chiefly the imperfection will ſhew itſelf.

To this haſty delivery, which drops ſome letters, and pronounces others too faintly; which runs ſyllables into each other, and cluſters words together; is owing that thick, mumbling, cluttering utterance, of which we have too many examples. The greateſt orator of antiquity, we are informed, had this fault, in a remarkable degree, even when he ventured firſt to ſpeak in public; on which account his ſpeech was exploded by the whole aſſembly.

But

But we are alſo told the cauſe of this; which is, that he had the misfortune, ſingular in thoſe days, of not having been trained in the art of ſpeaking.

In all accounts of Demoſthenes, we are informed, that to cure ſome impediments in his ſpeech, he uſed to exerciſe himſelf in declaiming with pebble-ſtones in his mouth. What thoſe impediments were, or how ſo uncommon a method, ſhould contribute to their removal, is left to conjecture; nor can I find that there has been any attempt made, to explain this point. But the difficulty will immediately be ſolved, if we ſuppoſe, that the imperfection which he wanted to remedy, was, an indiſtinct articulation; that owed its origin to a too great precipitancy of utterance: for the pebble-ſtones in that caſe, properly placed in the mouth, would impede the uſual velocity in the action of the tongue, and bring it in time to a due degree of ſlowneſs; beſides, they would be a conſtant memorandum to himſelf, to avoid any rapidity of utterance, which otherwiſe, from cuſtom, without ſome memento of that kind, he would be apt to fall into.

The example of this prince of orators, affords the higheſt encouragement, to all men who labour under imperfections of ſpeech, to endeavour their cure; as by diligence, and

uſing

uſing proper means, they have reaſon to expect ſucceſs. For perhaps there was not any one of his age, who laboured under ſo many defects in that way, even after he had advanced ſeveral years in manhood; and yet he not only got the better of all thoſe, but arrived at ſuch a pitch of exactneſs, delicacy, and power of delivery, as ſoon threw all competitors at a diſtance; tho' elocution had arrived at ſuch perfection in his days, that it might juſtly be called *the* age of orators. And all this as we are informed was chiefly accompliſhed by his own labour and aſſiduity. This of all others is the moſt encouraging circumſtance in theſe times, when a man can have little aſſiſtance from others, and muſt chiefly rely upon himſelf, and his own endeavours, to apply cloſely to the cure of any ill habits of delivery, and not to deſpair of ſucceſs.

To cure any imperfections in ſpeech, ariſing originally from too quick an utterance, the moſt effectual method, will be, to lay aſide an hour every morning, to be employed in the practice of reading aloud, in a manner, much ſlower than is neceſſary. This ſhould be done in the hearing of a friend, or ſome perſon whoſe office it ſhould be, to remind the reader, if at any time he ſhould perceive him mending his pace, and falling into his habit, of a quick utterance.

terance. Let him ſound all his ſyllables full, and have that point only in view, without reference to the ſenſe of the words; for if he is attentive to that, he will unwarily fall into his old habit: on which account, that he may not be under any temptation of that ſort, I would have him, for ſome time, read the words of a vocabulary, in the alphabetical order. In this way, he will ſoon find out, what letters and ſyllables, he is apt to ſound too faintly, and ſlur over. Let him make a liſt of thoſe words; and be ſure to pronounce them over diſtinctly, every morning, before he proceeds to others. Let him accuſtom himſelf alſo, when alone, to ſpeak his thoughts aloud, in the ſame ſlow manner, and with the ſame view. Otherwiſe, tho' he may get a habit, of reading more ſlowly, he will fall into his uſual manner, in diſcourſe: and this habit of ſpeaking aloud, when alone, will not only bring him to a more diſtinct utterance, but produce a facility of expreſſion, in which ſilent thinkers, are generally defective.

There is one cauſe of indiſtinct articulation, which is almoſt univerſal, and which ariſes from the very genius of our tongue; ſo that unleſs great care be taken, it is ſcarcely poſſible, but that every one ſhould be affected by it, in ſome degree. Every word, compoſed of more ſyllables than one, in our language, has one ſylla-

ble accented, and peculiarly diſtinguiſhed from the reſt; either by a ſmart percuſſion of the voice, or by dwelling longer upon it. If this accented ſyllable be properly diſtinguiſhed, the word will often be ſufficiently known, even tho' the others are ſounded very confuſedly. This produces a negligence, with regard to the articulation of the other ſyllables; which tho' it may not render the ſenſe obſcure, yet deſtroys all meaſure and proportion, and conſequently all harmony in delivery. This fault is ſo general, that I would ſtrongly recommend at firſt, the practice of pronouncing the unaccented ſyllables more fully, and dwelling longer upon them, than is neceſſary, as the only means, of bringing thoſe, whoſe utterance is too rapid, to a due medium. It is true there are ſome, who thro' the misfortune of bad inſtruction, or prevalence of early bad example, have a tedious drawling utterance, dwelling almoſt equally on all ſyllables (of which I ſhall ſpeak more under the head of accent;) but as this is neither conſonant to the genius of the tongue, nor the cuſtomary manner of ſpeech in this country, there is no great danger of erring on that ſide.

PRONUN-

PRONUNCIATION.

The next article which I propoſe to treat of, is, pronunciation. This word, which had ſuch a comprehenſive meaning amongſt the ancients, as to take in the whole compaſs of delivery, with its concomitants of look and geſture; is confined with as to very narrow bounds, and refers only to the manner of ſounding our words. This indeed is the only article relative to elocution, which claims any part of our attention. The reaſon of which ſeems to be this. In all other points of elocution, all ranks and orders of men, wherever born, or in whatever ſituation of life, are equally liable to the ſame defects, and to fall into the ſame errours. Amongſt thoſe bred at the univerſity, or at court, as well as amongſt mechanics, or ruſtics; amongſt thoſe who ſpeak in the ſenate-houſe, pulpit, or at the bar, as well as amongſt men in private life; we find ſtammerers, liſpers, a mumbling indiſtinct utterance; ill management of the voice, by pitching it in too high, or too low a key; ſpeaking too loud, or ſo ſoftly as not to be heard; and uſing diſcordant tones, and falſe cadences. Theſe being, I ſay, common to all ranks and claſſes of men, have not any marks of diſgrace put upon them, but on the contrary

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meet with general indulgence, from a general corruption.

But it is not ſo with regard to pronunciation; in which tho' there be as great a difference between men, as in any other article, yet this difference, is not ſo much between individuals, as whole bodies of men; inhabitants of different countries, and ſpeaking one common language, without agreeing in the manner of pronouncing it. Thus not only the Scotch, Iriſh, and Welſh, have each their own idioms, which uniformly prevail in thoſe countries, but almoſt every county in England, has its peculiar dialect. Nay in the very metropolis two different modes of pronunciation prevail, by which the inhabitants of one part of the town, are diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of the other. One is current in the city, and is called the cockney; the other at the court end, and is called the polite pronunciation. As amongſt theſe various dialects, one muſt have the preference, and become faſhionable, it will of courſe fall to the lot of that which prevails at court, the ſource of faſhions of all kinds. All other dialects, are ſure marks, either of a provincial, ruſtic, pedantic, or mechanic education; and therefore have ſome degree of diſgrace annexed to them. And as the court pronunciation is no where methodically taught, and can be ac-

quired only by converſing with people in polite life, it is a ſort of proof that a perſon has kept good company, and on that account is ſought after by all, who wiſh to be conſidered as faſhionable people, or members of the beau monde. This is the true reaſon that the article of pronunciation has been the chief, or rather only object of attention, in the whole affair of delivery. Yet tho' this is a point, the attainment of which is ardently deſired by an infinite number of individuals, there are few who ſucceed in the attempt, thro' want of method, rules, and aſſiſtance of maſters; without which old habits cannot eaſily be removed.

The difficulties to thoſe who endeavour to cure themſelves of a provincial or vicious pronunciation are chiefly three. 1ſt, The want of knowing exactly where the fault lies. 2dly, Want of method in removing it, and of due application. 3dly, Want of conſciouſneſs of their defects in this point. The way of getting over theſe difficulties I ſhall endeavour to point out.

As to the firſt article, the want of knowing exactly where the fault lies; moſt perſons who have a provincial dialect, finding that in every ſentence they utter, there are many things to be reprehended, are apt to imagine that their whole ſpeech is infected; and therefore look upon a total cure, againſt the ſtrong power of early

early habit, as impracticable: whereas were they to examine into the ſource of this irregularity, they would find it to ariſe perhaps, only from a different manner of ſounding ſome of the vowels, which ocurring generally in every ſentence, ſeems to infect their whole diſcourſe.

Thus the gentlemen of Ireland for inſtance, differ from thoſe of England, chiefly in two of the ſounds belonging to the vowels ă and ĕ, ſounded by them ā and ē, and even with regard to thoſe alſo, not always, but only in certain words. In many of which they give the ſound ā to the firſt vowel where it is pronounced ă, and the ſound ē to the ſecond, where it is pronounced ĕ. Thus the words patron, matron, are pronounced by them patron, matron, the *a* being ſounded as it is in father; ſever, ſea, pleaſe, are pronounced like favour, ſay, plays. They ſoon become conſcious of this diverſity of ſound, and not knowing exactly in what words it is uſed, in order to imitate the Engliſh pronunciation, they adopt the ſound ee in all words without diſtinction; inſtead of great they ſay greet, for occaſion occeeſion, days dees, &c.

Now this miſtake is evidently owing to want of method; for were there a vocabulary made, containing all the words in alphabetical order, in which the Engliſh pronunciation differs from the Iriſh with regard to theſe two ſounds,

their number would not be very conſiderable, and all might by moderate practice, in a ſhort time, make themſelves completely maſters of the polite pronunciation; for they ſcarcely differ in any other points, or at leaſt the exceptions are ſo few, that they might be brought into a very narrow compaſs.

This brings me to the conſideration of the ſecond impediment in the way of ſuch as would be deſirous of getting rid of a provincial dialect, the want of method; often the ſource of want of due application.

As there is no method ready to his hands, each individual muſt form one to himſelf. Let him in the firſt place employ his attention in diſcovering the particular vowels in the ſounding of which the provincial manner differs from the polite pronunciation. Let him by the help of dictionaries and vocabularies, make out a liſt of the words, in which thoſe vowels are to be found; and get ſome friend to attend him whilſt he reads thoſe words over, and mark their particular ſounds, diſtinguiſhing thoſe which differ from the general rule. When by theſe means he is able to ſound them all right, let him practice them daily over by himſelf, and let him ſelect ſuch words as he finds moſt difficult of pronunciation, and form them into ſentences, verſes, or anagrams; which he may

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get by heart and frequently repeat. Tho' this may ſeem laborious at firſt, the taſk in the progreſs will be found eaſier than is imagined, and he who makes uſe of this method will be encouraged to proceed, from the certainty of ſucceſs which will attend every ſtep of his progreſs. Whereas they who attempt to alter their pronunciation without method, only plunge from one errour into another, and ſoon grow weary of fruitleſs pains.

Beſide ſuch as have a provincial pronunciation of certain letters, perceptible in all words wherein thoſe letters are ſounded, there are few gentlemen of England who have received their education at country ſchools, that are not infected with a falſe pronunciation of certain words, peculiar to each county. It will not be difficult for them to collect all ſuch words, as they ſeldom are numerous; and after having collected them, if they will daily repeat them, till the tongue gets a habit of pronouncing the new ſounds with eaſe, they will ſoon take place of the others in their common ſpeech. And ſurely every gentleman will think it worth while, to take ſome pains, to get rid of ſuch evident marks of ruſticity.

How eaſy would it be to change the cockney pronunciation, by making uſe of a proper method! The chief difference lies in the manner

of pronouncing the ve, or u conſonant as it is commonly called, and the w; which they frequently interchangeably uſe for each other. Thus they call veal weal, vinegar winegar. On the other hand they call winter vinter, well vell. Tho' the converting the *w* into a *v* is not ſo common as the changing the *v* into a *w*.

Whoever will allot a certain portion of time every day, to read aloud in the hearing of a friend, all words in the dictionary beginning with thoſe two letters, will find in a ſhort time the true pronunciation become familiar to him. In children this errour might in a great meaſure be prevented, if when they are taught to ſpell, the letter were called by the name which marks its power, ve inſtead of u conſonant; for in that caſe the very ſound of the letter would guide them to the true pronunciation; whereas in the other the ſound itſelf confirms them in the vulgar one. A child might be ſoon made ſenſible of the abſurdity of ſounding v e a l weal, tho' it is impoſſible he ſhould perceive any impropriety in pronouncing u e a l in that manner.

Another vice, in the cockney pronunciation is, the changing the ſound of the laſt ſyllables of words ending in ow, wherever it is not ſounded like a diphthong, but like a ſim-

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ple o, (which is always the caſe when the laſt ſyllable is unaccented) into er—as feller for fellow—beller, holler, foller, winder,—for bellow, hollow, follow, window. As alſo adding the letter r to all proper names ending in *a* unaccented, as Belindar, Dorindar, for Belinda, Dorinda. But the words in our language which come under either of the above caſes are ſo few, that a liſt of them might ſoon be made, and the vicious habit give place to a juſt one by the method of practice before recommended.

With reſpect to the ruſtic pronunciation, prevailing in the ſeveral counties, I mean amongſt the gentry, and ſuch as have a liberal education, there does not ſeem to be any general errour of this ſort; their deviations being for the moſt part, only in certain words, ſounded in a peculiar manner by each county; and which probably owe their preſent pronunciation, to the continuation of the old cuſtom; which like other antiquated modes, changes more ſlowly in proportion to their diſtance from, or want of communication with the court. And theſe deviations not being very numerous, as was before obſerved, may eaſily be ſet right. But there is one defect which more generally prevails in the counties than any other, and indeed is daily gaining ground amongſt the politer

part of the world, I mean the omiſſion of the aſpirate in many words by ſome, and in moſt by others. Were this cuſtom to become general, it would deprive our tongue of one great fund of force and expreſſion. For not only certain words have a peculiar energy, but ſeveral emotions of the mind are ſtrongly marked, by this method of ſhooting out the words (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) with the full force of the breath. As in the exclamations what! when? where? why? how! hark! hiſt! —In the words hard, harſh, heave, hurt, whirl, whiſper, whiſtle. If any one were to pronounce the following ſentence, Hail ye high miniſters of Heav'n! how happy are we in hearing theſe your heavenly tydings! without an aſpirate thus—Ail ye igh miniſters of eaven! ow appy are we in earing theſe your eavenly tydings! who does not ſee that the whole expreſſion of triumph and exultation would be loſt? And the ſame may be obſerved with regard to the oppoſite expreſſion of abhorrence and deteſtation, if the following ſentence, How I hate, how I abhor ſuch hell-hounds! were pronounced in the ſame manner, ow I ate, ow I abbor ſuch ell-ounds. But let no one imagine, that becauſe he would not pronounce many ſucceſſive words, or a whole ſentence in this manner, he is therefore entirely free from defect in this point;

point; for I have met with but few inſtances in the courſe of my experience, and thoſe only in the moſt correct ſpeakers, of perſons who have not been guilty of omitting the aſpirate from ſome words, or giving it too faintly to others. The beſt method of curing this will be to read over frequently all words beginning with the letter *H* and thoſe beginning with *Wh* in the dictionary, and puſh them out with the full force of the breath, till an habit is obtained of aſpirating ſtrongly: nor need any one ſo circumſtanced be apprehenſive of falling into an extreme on that ſide, as the old habit will pull as ſtrongly on the oppoſite ſide, and in this, as in all other points, reduce it to a medium.

There is another article which has produced frequent diſputes with regard to pronunciation, as whether the word ſhould be pronounced con'cordance or concor'dance—ref'ractory or refrac'tory—but points of this kind come more properly under the next head which I ſhall treat of, that of Accent.

There are ſome other words alſo of dubious ſound, ſuch as goold or gold, wĭnd or wīnd; pronunciations of this kind have their ſeveral advocates, and there is no impropriety in uſing either. In caſes of this nature all who have an opportunity of being informed of that pronunciation moſt uſed by men of education at court,

court, will have the beſt authority on their ſide; as that is indeed the only ſtandard we can refer to, in critical caſes, as well as others.

I come now to ſpeak of the laſt, and chief obſtacle in the way of thoſe who are deſirous of changing a vitiated pronunciation for a right one; I mean a want of conſciouſneſs of their defects and errours in that point. And this is either total, or partial. Total, when men think they have no faults to amend; partial, when they know they have faults, but are not conſcious of them at the time they commit them. The former, whilſt they remain under the influence of this vain opinion, are incurable; the latter, ſtand in need only of method and information, to be ſet right. I have known many inſtances of both kinds, in perſons who have come to London with a provincial dialect. At firſt, the difference of pronunciation in many words, cannot but ſtrike them; but as they know not any method by which they may acquire that which is right, they leave it to time to bring about a change; not conſidering that early habit cannot be diſlodged, but by much pains and practice. When their ears have been, for any length of time, familiarized to the new pronunciation, they no longer perceive the diſtinction; and inſtead of attributing this to the true cauſe, they are apt to flat-

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ter themſelves, that it is owing to a gradual change wrought in their own pronunciation to the faſhionable one. There are others, who take ſome pains to find out their faults, and to be informed of the particulars in which they differ from the eſtabliſhed mode; and think the buſineſs is accompliſhed, when they have obtained this knowledge. But they do not conſider that to know, and to practice, are two different things; and that early cuſtom will ever prove too ſtrong for the former, if the latter does not come to its aid. Nothing is more frequent than inſtances of perſons conſtantly miſpronouncing ſeveral words, not thro' ignorance of the right way, for they will immediately correct themſelves if put in mind of it; but thro' want of conſciouſneſs at the time that they uſe the falſe one, to which they have been habituated. And in proportion as this want of conſciouſneſs takes place, the habit muſt for ever gain ſtrength. This will ſufficiently explain the reaſon that ſo many provincials have grown old in the capital, without making any change in their original dialect. No man can amend a fault, of which he is not conſcious; and conſciouſneſs cannot exert itſelf, when barred up by habit, or vanity. In theſe circumſtances it is not from ourſelves, but from others, that we are to learn when we commit

a fault;

a fault; and perhaps there is no civilized country in the world where people find it ſo difficult to get information on this head, as England. Here it is cuſtomary enough to laugh at foreigners, and ridicule provincials, for errours and defects in pronunciation; but to inform them of their faults when they commit them, or to attempt to correct them, would be thought the height of ill manners. In conſequence of this miſtaken notion, they alſo who have moſt need of aid, conſider it as a ſort of inſult when it is offered, and will not patiently ſubmit to correction; more eſpecially ſuch natives of England as have any faults of this kind, who think they naturally pronounce their mother tongue right. By ſhutting their ears againſt information, they indulge themſelves in the vain opinion that they have no faults; like the fooliſh man who ſhut his eyes that no one might ſee him. How much more rational is the behaviour of the French in this point. They know that ſtrangers and provincials muſt neceſſarily commit faults in pronouncing their tongue; and therefore do not think that a thing which is naturally to be expected, is a proper ſubject of laughter or ridicule. On the contrary, they are always ready, with the utmoſt politeneſs, to ſet people right, whenever they fall into any miſtakes. But as no aid of this

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kind is to be expected in England, and as the rectifying bad habits depends upon our conſciouſneſs of them at the time we fall into them, and conſciouſneſs can be awakened only by information; all who have a mind to get rid of ſuch bad habits, muſt endeavour to prevail upon their intimate friends and acquaintance, never to let any opportunity ſlip of putting them in mind of any fault they commit. Tho' this may eaſily be complied with in private, yet as it is contrary to cuſtom to attempt it in mixt company, a private ſign agreed on will be a ſufficient hint in that caſe.

LECTURE III.

ACCENT.

HAVING treated in my former of articulation and pronunciation, I come now to conſider the third article, that of Accent. The meaning of that term was very different amongſt the Ancients from what it is with us. Amongſt them we know that accents were marked by certain inflections of the voice like muſical notes; and the grammarians to this day, with great formality inform their pupils, that the acute accent, is the raiſing the voice on a certain ſyllable; the grave, a depreſſion of it; and the circumflex, a raiſing and depreſſion both, in one and the ſame ſyllable. This jargon they conſtantly preſerve, tho' they have no ſort of ideas annexed to theſe words; for if they are aſked to ſhew how this is to be done, they cannot tell, and their practice always belies their precept. The truth is, the Ancients did obſerve this diſtinction, becauſe we have it on

the authority of all their writers, who have treated on the ſubject; but the manner in which they did it muſt remain for ever a ſecret to us; for with the living tongue, periſhed the tones alſo, which we in vain endeavour to ſeek for in their viſible marks. Yet ſuch was the abſurdity of maſters of grammar ſchools on the revival of ancient literature, that tho' it was impoſſible for them to diſcover the true uſe of the accents amongſt the Greeks, rather than acknowledge their ignorance, or that thoſe marks were become utterly uſeleſs, they fell into a practice as abſurd as could poſſibly have entered into the heads of the moſt ignorant Barbarians; for obſtinately and pedantically retaining the marks, notwithſtanding their evident inanity, to ſupport this practice, they determined to apply them rather to a falſe uſe, than to none at all. And finding it impoſſible to come at the leaſt knowledge of the accents as uſed amongſt the Ancients, they determined at all events to adopt into their practice the modern uſe of them; tho' that term has quite a different ſignification amongſt us. This practice is juſt as wiſe, as if the ſame term which ſignified man amongſt the Greeks, ſignified horſe amongſt us, and we were to reaſon from names to things, and conclude therefore that a horſe was a rational creature. And indeed

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it had pretty much the ſame effects in point of reading Greek, producing the moſt manifeſt abſurdities. For whoever read Greek in that way, neceſſarily deſtroyed all quantity and meaſure; and therefore they were obliged to read the ſame individual words in a different manner in verſe, from what they did in proſe. Amazing! that ſuch an abſurdity did not at once convince them of their errour. But as ſome eminent maſters, of more enlarged minds, have lately aboliſhed this practice in the chief of the public ſchools, and as a few editors have ventured to publiſh ſome Greek books without thoſe inſignificant marks, it is to be hoped that a reformation in this article will ſoon be made general.

Thus much I thought neceſſary to premiſe, that any perſon who has early imbibed confuſed notions of the term accent in the ancient languages, may baniſh them from his mind, and only be prepared to conſider what the uſe of it is amongſt us.

The term with them, ſignified certain inflections of the voice, or notes annexed to certain ſyllables, in ſuch proportions as probably contributed to make their ſpeech muſical. Of theſe they had chiefly three in general uſe, which were denominated accents, and the term uſed in the plural number.

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The term with us has no reference to inflections of the voice, or muſical notes, but only means a peculiar manner of diſtinguiſhing one ſyllable of a word from the reſt, denominated by us accent; and the term for that reaſon uſed by us in the ſingular number.

This diſtinction is made by us in two ways; either by dwelling longer upon one ſyllable than the reſt; or by giving it a ſmarter percuſſion of the voice in utterance. Of the firſt of theſe, we have inſtances in the words *glōry*, *fāther*, *hōly*; of the laſt, in BAT'TLE, HAB'IT, BOR'ROW. So that accent, with us, is not referred to tune, but to time; to quantity, not quality; to the more equable or precipitate motion of the voice, not to the variation of notes or inflections. Theſe have nothing to do with words ſeparately taken, and are only made uſe of, to enforce, or adorn them, when they are ranged in ſentences.

It is by the accent chiefly that the quantity of our ſyllables is regulated; but not according to the miſtaken rule laid down by all who have written on the ſubject, that the accent always makes the ſyllable long; than which there cannot be any thing more falſe. For the two ways of diſtinguiſhing ſyllables by accent, as mentioned before, are directly oppoſite, and produce quite contrary effects; the one, by

dwelling on the ſyllable, neceſſarily makes it long; the other, by the ſmart percuſſion of the voice, as neceſſarily makes it ſhort. Thus the firſt ſyllables in glōry, fāther, hōly, are long; whilſt thoſe in băttle, hăbit, bŏrrow, are ſhort. The quantity depends upon the ſeat of the accent, whether it be on the vowel or conſonant; if on the vowel, the ſyllable is neceſſarily long, as it makes the vowel long; if on the conſonant, it may be either long or ſhort, according to the nature of the conſonant, or the time taken up in dwelling upon it. If the conſonant be in its nature a ſhort one, the ſyllable is neceſſarily ſhort. If it be a long one, that is, one whoſe ſound is capable of being lengthened, it may be long or ſhort at the will of the ſpeaker.

By a ſhort conſonant I mean one whoſe ſound cannot be continued after a vowel, ſuch as c or k p t, as ac, ap, at—whilſt that of long conſonants can, as, el em en er ev, &c. If we change the ſeat of the accent in the inſtances before mentioned we ſhould change their quantity; were we inſtead of GLŌ-RY to ſay GLOR'-Y inſtead of FĀ-THER FAT'H-ER—inſtead of HŌ-LY HOL'-Y—the firſt ſyllables would become ſhort—as on the other hand, were we to dwell on the vowels inſtead of the conſonants in the laſt inſtances they would change from ſhort to long—ſhould we for inſtance inſtead of bat'tle

ſay

ſay báttle—for ha-'bit hábit—and for bor'row bórrow. This is one of the chief ſources of the difference between the Scotch and Engliſh gentlemen in the pronunciation of Engliſh; I mean, the laying the accent on the vowel, inſtead of the conſonant, by which means they make ſyllables long, that are ſhort with us.

And here I cannot help taking notice of a circumſtance, which ſhews in the ſtrongeſt light, the amazing deficiency of thoſe, who have hitherto employed their labours on that ſubject, in point of knowledge of the true genius and conſtitution of our tongue. Several of the compilers of dictionaries, vocabularies, and ſpelling books, have undertaken to mark the accents of our words; but ſo little acquainted were they with the nature of our accent, that they thought it neceſſary only to mark the ſyllable on which the ſtreſs is to be laid, without marking the particular letter of the ſyllable to which the accent belongs. They have therefore marked them by one uniform rule, that of placing the accent always over the vowel of the diſtinguiſhed ſyllable. By which means they have done worſe, than if they had not pointed out ſuch ſyllables at all; for this rule, inſtead of guiding ſtrangers to a true pronunciation, infallibly leads them to a wrong one, whenever the accent ſhould be placed on the

conſonant. Thus all foreigners and provincials, muſt for ever be miſled, by conſulting ſuch dictionaries. For inſtance, if they look for the word *endeavour*, finding the accent upon the vowel e, they will of courſe ſound it endéavour. In the ſame manner ded'icate will be called dé-dicate, precip'itate precípitate—hab'it, há-bit—and ſo on. Now had they only attended to the plain rule, of placing the accent always over the conſonant, whenever the ſtreſs is upon that, they would have afforded the beſt and moſt general guide to juſt pronunciation, that could be found with regard to our tongue. For it is an unerring rule thro'out the whole, that whenever the accent is on the conſonant, the preceding vowel has a ſhort ſound. As there is alſo another infallible rule in our tongue, that no vowel ever has a long ſound in an unaccented ſyllable, if this article of accent were properly adjuſted, it would prove a maſter-key to the pronunciation of our whole tongue.

When we ſee ſuch a palpable and groſs miſtake as this, in our compilers of dictionaries, we ſhould be at a loſs to account for it, if we did not reflect, that they, as well as our grammarians, have never examined the ſtate of the living tongue, but wholly confined their labours to the dead written language; their chief object

ject therefore has been to aſſiſt ſilent readers, in comprehending the meaning of the words; not thoſe who are to read aloud, in a proper delivery; to teach men how to write, not how to ſpeak correctly. In this view, the marking the ſyllable alone on which the accent is laid, without attending to the particular letter, would anſwer their purpoſe, as it would enable writers to arrange their words properly in metre, according to the rules of Engliſh verſification. Every word in our language of more ſyllables than one has an accented ſyllable. The longer polyſyllables, have frequently two accents, but one is ſo much ſtronger than the other, as to ſhew that it is but one word; and the inferior accent is always leſs forcible, than any accent that is the ſingle one in a word. Thus in the word expos″tulato′ry—the ſtrongeſt accent is on the ſecond ſyllable pos″, but there is a fainter accent on the laſt ſyllable but one, ſounded tur′, expos″tulatúr-ry, as a ſucceſſion of four unaccented ſyllables would not be agreeable to the ear, and might prevent diſtinct articulation. All monoſyllables in our language are alſo accented, the particles alone excepted, which are always without accent, when not emphatical; and they are long or ſhort, in the ſame manner as before mentioned, according as the ſeat of the accent is on the vowel or conſonant. Thus,

ad'd, *led'*, *bid'*, *rod'*, *cub'*, are all ſhort, the voice paſſing quickly over the vowel to the conſonant; but for the contrary reaſon, the words áll, láid, bíde, róad, cúbe, are long, the accent being on the vowels, on which the voice dwells ſome time before it ſounds the conſonants.

As no utterance can be agreeable to the ear, which is void of proportion; and as all quantity, or proportion of time in utterance, depends upon a due obſervation of the accent; it is a matter of abſolute neceſſity to all, who would arrive at a good and graceful delivery, to be maſter of that point. Nor is the uſe of accent in our language confined to quantity alone; but it is alſo the chief mark by which words are diſtinguiſhed from mere ſyllables. Or rather I may ſay, it is the very eſſence of words, which without that, would be only ſo many collections of ſyllables. The eſſence of a ſyllable conſiſts in articulation only, for every articulate ſound of courſe forms a ſyllable. The eſſence of a word conſiſts in accent as well as articulation. This will be made clear by an inſtance. If I pronounce the word ar-ti-cu-la-tion, in that manner, without diſtinguiſhing any ſyllable from the reſt, it is no longer a word, but a ſucceſſion of ſyllables; but when I pronounce it articulátion, laying an accent on the ſyllable lá, that it is which conſtitutes

conſtitutes a word, by uniting the preceding ſyllables, and the ſubſequent one to itſelf. And with reſpect to monoſyllables, all which can properly be called words, are accented; for the particles, which are unaccented, can diſcharge their office perfectly in their mere ſyllabic ſtate; they being in fact nothing more than ſimple articulate ſounds to mark the relation and difference between words, and are therefore better fitted for that office, by being ſomewhat different from words, than if they were of the ſame claſs; and indeed in their very name of particles, this diſtinction ſeems to have been intended. But when, by being emphatical, they obtain an accent, they then become words; not only in name, but in fact; as in that caſe they ſtand in the room of words and diſcharge their office.

It is true this manner of diſtinguiſhing words from mere ſyllables is not neceſſary, nor the only way by which it can be done. The Greeks we know had another manner, which was that of diſtinguiſhing them by a certain tone or note annexed to each word, which under their nice regulations, muſt have contributed to make their ſpeech more muſical and pleaſing to the ear, than that of any other nation in the world; and this was acknowledged by the natives of all other countries who viſit-

ed them, and even by the Romans themſelves, in the height of their glory. Nay it was known that foreigners liſtened to their orators, tho' they did not underſtand their language, with as much pleaſure as we do to Italian ſingers; from the mere delight they took, in the harmony of their utterance. But as this is a method not purſued by any of the moderns, excepting the Chineſe, of whom we know but little, and a thing about which we can have but very obſcure ideas, it would anſwer no end to beſtow any farther conſideration upon it.

The third way of diſtinguiſhing words from ſyllables, is by making a perceptible pauſe at the end of each word. This laſt is the practice of many modern nations; but in languages that abound in long ſyllables, and whoſe words are therefore often compoſed of ſyllables of an equal length, this method of diſtinguiſhing them by perceptible pauſes, muſt add to the tediouſneſs, with which the ear is diſguſted by a ſucceſſion of long ſounds.

Some certain method of diſtinguiſhing words from mere ſyllables, muſt evidently be one of the firſt ſteps taken, in reducing language to any degree of regularity; and this can be done only by one of the three ways before mentioned: either by affixing an accent to each word; or a certain note or tone; or a pauſe

at the end. The ſecond method uſed by the Greeks has never been the practice of any part of Europe, and therefore it would be but fruitleſs labour to examine it. But it is well worth the pains to enquire, whether the firſt uſed by us, or the latter by many other nations, is in its own nature beſt; as it may turn our attention to a point hitherto little conſidered, and yet which is one of the chief ſources of ſuperiority that we have over our neighbours; and one of the greateſt perfections of which our language has to boaſt. But above all, becauſe the knowledge of this will make every native of theſe kingdoms better acquainted with the peculiar genius of our tongue, and afford him one of the beſt lights to guide him to a juſt and harmonious delivery.

Now to compare theſe two ways of diſtinguiſhing words, by accent, or by pauſe; firſt with regard to utility, and next to ornament.

With reſpect to utility, it muſt be allowed, that the method of diſtinguiſhing words from mere ſyllables, which is the moſt evident and preciſe, and which takes up the leaſt time, is beſt. Now there cannot be a more evident or preciſe diſtinction, than that of accent; nor one which can be executed with more eaſe and certainty; it requires no nicety of ear, as in the diſtinguiſhing of tones, or meaſuring time; it only

only demands that one ſyllable ſhould have a greater ſtreſs laid on it than others: and the only difference is in laying the ſtreſs on the vowel or conſonant, which is of courſe acquired by natives, and by a proper method, might ſoon be obtained by others. But the diſtinction by pauſes, having reference to the meaſurement of time, can have no certain rule in irregular diſcourſe, and muſt depend upon the ear of each individual. We know how difficult it is to obſerve exactneſs of time in the pauſes of muſic, even with the aſſiſtance of rules and marks; how much more ſo muſt it be where there are none? And with reſpect to brevity, it muſt be evident, that the way of marking them, which adds not at all to their natural time, muſt be preferable to that whoſe very eſſence conſiſts in taking up more time. In point of uſe therefore accent has clearly the preference. Now let us conſider them with regard to ornament.

The ornament of ſpeech, ſo far as relates to ſound, conſiſts in the pleaſure which it gives the ear. This is the reſult of harmony; and harmony, of proportion and variety, of tones and times. Now as tones are here out of the queſtion, let us ſee which of theſe ways bids faireſt for fixing a juſt meaſurement of proportion, and agreeable variety of times.

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I have already mentioned that when the accent is on the vowel, it of courſe makes the ſyllable long; and when the accent is on the conſonant, the ſyllable may be either long or ſhort, according to the nature of the conſonant, or will of the ſpeakers. And as the accent alone is a ſufficient diſtinction of words, without pauſing longer at the end of them, than at the end of a ſyllable, excepting where the ſenſe requires it; and as all unaccented ſyllables are ſhort, the quantity of our ſyllables is adjuſted by the eaſieſt and ſimpleſt rule in the world, and in the exacteſt proportion. When we conſider too, that this is effected by the very power which conſtitutes words, and rendered manifeſt by the ſame mark, which diſtinguiſhes words from mere ſyllables, it ought to ſtrike us with admiration. It is a maxim in mechanicks, that the fewer and ſimpler the principles are by which any machine is conſtructed to anſwer its end, the better; and the ſame will hold here.

But in the manner of diſtinguiſhing words from ſyllables by longer pauſes at their end, it will be extremely difficult, as was before obſerved, to keep a due proportion in that way. Some will be apt to run their words too cloſe together, and ſo reduce them to the ſtate of ſyllables: Or they will make the pauſes too long, which may confound the ſenſe, take up much unneceſſary

unneceſſary time in diſcourſe, and produce a tediouſneſs very diſguſting to the ear. But ſuppoſing that a due medium could be obſerved, which is ſcarce poſſible at beſt, and in general is utterly impoſſible, this method of diſtinguiſhing words, muſt, in its own nature, prevent any regular proportion of time being ſettled, in the delivery of ſuch a language. For as the time of the pauſe muſt be equal at the end of each word, and as words are conſtituted of different numbers of ſyllables, the diſtance of thoſe pauſes from each other muſt depend wholly upon the inequality of the words which compoſe the ſentences, and therefore never can be reduced to any certain proportion. If for inſtance, a word of two ſyllables is followed by a monoſyllable, and that by a word of five ſyllables, all of the ſame length; the diſtance of time between the firſt verbal pauſe and the ſecond, will be as two to one; and the diſtance of time between the ſecond and third, will be as one to five; and out of ſuch unequal and uncertain proportions, nothing harmonious can be produced.

Another reaſon, againſt uſing this method of diſtinguiſhing words from ſyllables by final pauſes, is, that pauſes or ſtops of the voice, are chiefly uſed to point out the connection and dependance which words have on each other,

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by dividing ſentences into different members, according to their connection, and marking that connection by different lengths of pauſes. Now if the ſame method is taken to diſtinguiſh words from each other, as is uſed to diſtinguiſh the different members of ſentences, it will hardly be poſſible to hinder their intereſts from claſhing, and producing confuſion in the meaning. And as the making ourſelves clearly underſtood, is the chief end of ſpeech, the article of perceptible pauſes, or the ſtops of the voice, ſo eſſentially neceſſary to that end, ſhould be applied to that uſe only.

As there are but the three ways before mentioned by which words can be diſtinguiſhed, either one, or more of them muſt be adopted, by all who aim at any regularity of utterance. If more than one way be introduced, it will breed confuſion, and it will be impoſſible to ſettle any due proportion. In the French language, I mean in the public delivery of it, where they aim at regularity, all three are uſed on different occaſions. Sometimes words are diſtinguiſhed by perceptible pauſes; ſometimes by accents; ſometimes by tones. This promiſcuous uſe of them is ſubverſive of all harmony, and takes off from the ſeveral powers of each in their diſtinct provinces. Where a language abounds in words compoſed of ſyllables equal-

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ly long, they muſt appear to be equally accented, and nothing can diſtinguiſh them in that caſe but verbal pauſes, or tones; the inconvenience of the former has been already laid open, and if the latter are not ſettled by a muſical ſcale, ſo far as they prevail, they muſt render the ſound of the language diſcordant to the ear. Accent as a ſure mark of diſtinction, can only take place in ſuch words as are compoſed of ſhort ſyllables, or of one long and the reſt ſhort. This may be ſeen in every word of the Engliſh language compoſed of more ſyllables than one; as no vowel ever has its full long ſound unleſs it be accented. Thus in the word admire the *i* in the laſt ſyllable being accented has its full long ſound; but when by the addition of a ſyllable the ſeat of the accent is changed, as in ad'mirable, the *i* is changed to a ſhort one. The beſt way of ſeeing clearly the difference between the genius of the French tongue and ours in this reſpect, will be to ſound a number of words immediately borrowed from them, and ſee in what the diverſity of pronunciation conſiſts. Such as ābāndōn ăban'dŏn, cōmbāt cŏm'băt, cōllēge col'lĕge, cōmmūn com'mŏn, cōmpāniōn compan'ion, Eūrōpe Eúrŏpe, ōbſtācle ob'ſtăclĕ, ſōlīde ſol'ĭd, Dōcteūr Doc'tŏr, fāveūr fávoŭr, hōnēur hon'oŭr, &c. in moſt of which words the ſyllables are all

all long in the French, and ſhort in the Engliſh, as the accents are placed on the vowels in the French and on the conſonants in the Engliſh. This it is which makes moſt of their words appear to an Engliſh ear to have as many accents as ſyllables, by obliging them to give an equal ſtreſs to them. And this would be our caſe alſo, even with the ſhort ſound of the vowels, if we were to reſt an equal time upon each ſyllable, as they do: For inſtance, if inſtead of aban'don we ſhould ſay á-ban'-dón, for com'-bat com'-bát, for com'mon com'món. But this amongſt us would be evidently not pronouncing words, but ſyllables only, as children do when learning to ſpell. The eſſence of Engliſh words conſiſting in accent, as that of ſyllables in articulation. We know that there are as many ſyllables as we hear articulate ſounds, and as many words as we hear accents. So that if any one places two equal accents, on the ſame word, it ſounds to our ear like two words. As if we ſhould ſay fórtúne inſtead of fórtŭne; nátúre for nátŭre; hor'roúrs for hor'roŭrs, bat'-tlemént for batt'lemĕnt, &c. Whoever will attend to this point, will find, that nothing is more common in public ſpeakers, but particularly thoſe of the ſtage, than to commit this fault; and in this the peculiarity, of what is called threatical pronunciation, chiefly conſiſts.

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Nor can there be a greater fault in pronunciation than this, as it is an offence againſt the conſtitution of our tongue; againſt the fundamental rule upon which the very eſſence of our words depends; and which is ſo univerſal, that there is not a ſingle exception to it, in our whole language when the words are properly pronounced.

Since therefore it muſt be allowed, that in point of utility, that method of diſtinguiſhing words from ſyllables, which is ſhorteſt, cleareſt, and moſt conſtant (that is which admits of the feweſt exceptions) is the beſt, I have already ſhewn that all theſe qualities belong to accent. It is ſhorteſt, becauſe it renders all other ſyllables ſhort, which need only be articulated and not dwelt upon; and becauſe it puts an end to the neceſſity of verbal pauſes, which need be no longer than the ſyllabic, the accent alone ſufficiently diſtinguiſhing words. It is cleareſt, becauſe the diſtinction muſt be obvious to every one who knows what an accent is, and he can never miſtake or doubt. And it is moſt conſtant, for it never admits of an exception, as every word has an accent.

And as to harmony, or the ſettling the quantity, or proportion of ſyllables to each other, in order to produce metrical feet, there could not be deviſed a more eaſy, clear, or certain me-

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thod, than that of doing it by the very ſame rule, which points out the diſtinction of words; ſo that he who is maſter of the one, of courſe becomes maſter of the other. When we reflect too, that this is the ſource from which is derived the plenty of ſhort ſyllables, yet in a proportional ratio to the long ones, in which reſpect all modern languages (our own excepted) are ſo defective, as either to be wholly incapable of numbers, or but ill adapted to them; and that by the variety of the ſeat of accent, our words eaſily and naturally fall into all ſorts of metrical feet, it muſt be acknowledged that in point of beauty and elegance, we have as great advantage over other tongues, by means of our uſe of the accent, as we have in ſhortneſs and diſtinctneſs.

Nor is this all; for by means of accent, the times of pauſes alſo are rendered quicker, and their proportions more eaſily to be adjuſted, and obſerved. Verbal pauſes becoming unneceſſary, the ſentential only take place; it follows of courſe, that the ſmalleſt ſentential pauſe, need not be longer than what would be neceſſary to a verbal one; and conſequently one half leſs than where the others are uſed: for where verbal pauſes take place, the ſmalleſt ſentential pauſe, to make a proportional diſtinction of one from the other, muſt be the double

of the verbal one, and the reſt follow in that proportion; which muſt occaſion a dull and diſguſting tedioufneſs. For pauſes having no real beauty in themſelves, like tones, and being uſed thro' neceſſity only, in order to make the ſenſe more clear, cannot be too ſhort, provided they fully anſwer that end; therefore the meaſure of the ſmalleſt pauſe, ſhould be its manifeſt perceptibility; all additional time beyond this, being unneceſſary. And as the only beauty, which can ariſe from pauſes, muſt depend upon a due obſervation of proportion in their duration, according as the different members which compoſe a ſentence require; the fewer in number the pauſes are, the eaſier will it be to obſerve that proportion. Now where ſentential pauſes only take place, they will be but four in number, as the comma, ſemicolon, colon, and full ſtop. But if the verbal pauſe be admitted, there will be five, and a much more difficult ratio introduced, as I have already ſhewn. Beſides, as was before obſerved, where verbal pauſes take place, it is impoſſible any regular proportion of time can be obſerved, words being formed of ſuch different and unequal numbers of ſyllables; and over theſe the compoſer has no power: But it is not ſo with regard to ſentential pauſes; for as the conſtruction of periods, or verſes, and their different

members, depends wholly upon the will of the compoſer, it is in his power to make ſuch a proportional ratio of the ſtops, as always to produce harmony.

Thus far then no language can appear to be built upon ſimpler, eaſier, or more regular principles. All our thoughts are communicated in ſentences; ſentences are compoſed of words and pauſes; words are made up of ſyllables, and ſyllables of letters. Sound is the eſſence of letters, articulation of ſyllables, accent of words, and collections of words united by emphaſis and divided by proper pauſes, of ſentences. And accent at the ſame time that it conſtitutes words, ſettles their quantity, and prepares the way for due and proportional pauſes. Thus words, conſidered as the marks of our ideas, in the nature of coin, come from the mint with the cleareſt and plaineſt ſtamp; and are fitted in the beſt manner, for a ready and briſk circulation, in the commerce of diſcourſe. I ſhall now conclude this head with a few practical rules for the ſtrict obſervation of the laws of accent; the neceſſity of which, I hope, is by this time apparent to all my hearers.

All perſons who pronounce Engliſh words properly, of courſe lay the accent right, as that is part of pronunciation; and never fail to do ſo in converſation. But many, when they come

to read or ſpeak in public, tranſgreſs the rules of accent. This ariſes from a miſtaken notion in ſome, that words are rendered more diſtinct to a large aſſembly, by dwelling longer upon the ſyllables which compoſe them; and in others, that it adds to the pomp and ſolemnity of public declamation, in which they think every thing ought to be different from private diſcourſe. This has been chiefly the vice of the ſtage, and has principally given riſe to the diſtinction of what is commonly called Theatrical Declamation, in oppoſition to that of the natural kind; into an imitation of which many public ſpeakers have been betrayed, and their manner called on that account Theatrical. Upon examination it would appear, that it ariſes chiefly from their dwelling upon ſyllables that are unaccented, thro' a notion that it makes the words move more ſlow, ſtately, and uniform, than the quicker and more ſpirited accents will allow. This was a fault which Shakeſpear complained of in his time, and which has not been thoroughly amended ſince; tho' there have been ſome late efforts towards it, and ſome progreſs made in it. The paſſage alluded to in Shakeſpear is in the advice given to the player by Hamlet; where in laying down rules for a juſt delivery, he ſays, 'Speak the ſpeech I 'pray you as I pronounced it to you, tripping-

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'ly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as 'ſome of our actors do, I had as lieve the 'town-crier ſpoke my lines.' By 'trippingly 'on the tongue,' he means the bounding from accent to accent; tripping along from word to word, without reſting on ſyllables by the way. And by mouthing, is meant, dwelling upon ſyllables that have no accent, and ought therefore to be uttered as quickly as is conſiſtent with diſtinct articulation; or prolonging the ſounds of the accented ſyllables, beyond their due proportion of time. The leaſt degree of faultineſs in this reſpect, gives an artificial air to language; inaſmuch as it differs from the uſual, and what is commonly called, natural manner of utterance; and is on that account, of all others, to be avoided moſt by public ſpeakers; whoſe buſineſs it is induſtriouſly to conceal art; And chiefly by players, whoſe office it is, in Shakeſpear's phraſe, 'to hold, as it were, a mir-'rour up to nature.' It is true this vice does not prevail ſo much at preſent, as it has done in the memory of many perſons now living; when it was thought an impropriety, to have any thing reſembling real life, in the repreſentation of Tragedy; when men were neither to walk nor ſpeak like human creatures: and had '*neither the accent of Chriſtians nor the gait of* '*Chriſtians, Pagans or men.*' Some indeed may

ſay, like the player in Hamlet, 'we hope we 'have reformed that indifferently amongſt us;' to whom I ſhould reply in Hamlet's words, 'O 'reform it altogether;' and give the ſame earneſt advice to all public ſpeakers whatſoever; not only, on account of the artificial air beforementioned which it gives to the utterance, but alſo as it changes the very genius of our tongue, and deprives it of that great ſource of diſtinctneſs, and proportion, which I have before explained. If any one pronounces the words fórtúne, in'-croac'h-men't, con'jéctúre, gráti-túde, tó-morrów, hap'pinéſs, patien'ce; he does not utter words, at leaſt not Engliſh words, but ſyllables; which with us, are always tied together by an accent; as, for'tune, incroáchment, conjec'ture, grat'itude, tomor'row, hap'pineſs, pátience. And yet, this is an errour, which almoſt all perſons who ſpeak with ſolemnity, run into, for want of knowing in what true ſolemnity of delivery conſiſts. Which, tho' it may demand a ſlower utterance than uſual, yet, requires that the ſame proportion in point of quantity be obſerved in the ſyllables, as there is in muſical notes, when the ſame tune is played in quicker or ſlower time. But of this I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more at large hereafter.

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The only rule, with regard to this head, neceſſary to be obſerved by all public ſpeakers, who can pronounce Engliſh properly, is to lay the accent always on the ſame ſyllable, and the ſame letter of the ſyllable, which they uſually do in common diſcourſe, and to take care not to lay any accent or ſtreſs, upon any other ſyllable. A rule ſo plain and eaſy, that nothing but affectation, or bad habits, contracted from imitating others, can prevent its always taking place. And yet the want of knowing, or attending to this rule, is one of the chief ſources, of the unnatural manner of declaiming, which is ſo generally complained of, tho' few can tell exactly where the fault lies.

I ſhall only add upon this head, that there are few things in our language, ſo regular, and well ſettled, as the article of accent. It is true there are ſome words that have occaſioned many diſputes about the ſeat of the accent, and have had their different partiſans; ſuch as con'cordance or concor'dance, ref'ractory or refrac'tory, cor'ruptible or corrup'tible, accen't-ed or ac'cented; the accenting of theſe being doubtful, every man is at liberty to chooſe which he likes beſt; and in giving the preference, the ear beyond all doubt ought to be conſulted, as to that which forms the moſt agreeable ſound, rather than an abſurd,

pedantic rule, attempted to be laid down, that of throwing the accent as far back as poſſible; which has no foundation in the genius of our tongue, and muſt frequently produce the moſt diſcordant ſounds. And if any one who has the liberty of chooſing, ſhould prefer the ſound of con'cordance, to concórdance; ref'ractory to refrac'tory, or cor'ruptible to corrup'tible; he cannot poſſibly make any one form a better opinion of his judgment, but I am ſure he will give thoſe who have any ſkill in ſounds a very bad one of his ear.

LECTURE IV.

OF EMPHASIS.

HAVING treated of Accent, I now proceed to conſider the next head, that of Emphaſis.

Emphaſis, diſcharges in ſentences, the ſame kind of office, that accent does in words. As accent, is the link which ties ſyllables together, and forms them into words; ſo emphaſis, unites words together, and forms them into ſentences, or members of ſentences. As accent, dignifies the ſyllable on which it is laid, and makes it more diſtinguiſhed by the ear than the reſt; ſo emphaſis, ennobles the word to which it belongs, and preſents it in a ſtronger light to the underſtanding. Accent, is the mark which diſtinguiſhes words from each other, as ſimple types of our ideas, without reference to their agreement or diſagreement: Emphaſis, is the mark which points out their ſeveral degrees of relationſhip, and the rank which they hold in the mind. Accent, addreſſes itſelf to the ear

ear only; emphaſis, thro' the ear, to the underſtanding. Were there no accents, words would be reſolved into their original ſyllables: Were there no emphaſis, ſentences would be reſolved into their original words; and in this caſe, the hearer muſt be at the pains himſelf, firſt, of making out the words, and afterwards their meaning: And as this could not be done, without ſuch length of pauſes, at the end of ſentences, and their ſeveral members, as would allow him time to revolve in his memory, the ſounds which had been uttered, it would make the action of liſtening to diſcourſe laborious and diſguſtingly tedious. Whereas by the uſe of accent and emphaſis, Words, and their meaning, being pointed out by certain marks, at the ſame time that they are uttered, the hearer has all trouble ſaved, but that of liſtening; and can accompany the ſpeaker at the ſame pace that he goes, with as clear a comprehenſion of the matter offered to his conſideration, as the ſpeaker himſelf has, if the ſpeaker delivers himſelf well.

The neceſſity of obſerving propriety of emphaſis is ſo great, that the true meaning of words cannot be conveyed without it. For the ſame individual words, ranged in the ſame order, may have ſeveral different meanings, according to the placing of the emphaſis. Thus, to uſe a trite

trite inſtance, the following ſentence may have as many different meanings, as there are words in it, by varying the emphaſis. 'Shall you ride to town to-morrow?' If the emphaſis is on ſhall, as, ſhàll you ride to town to-morrow? it implies, that the perſon ſpoken to had expreſſed before ſuch an intention, but that there is ſome doubt in the queſtioner, whether he be determined on it or not, and the anſwer may be, 'Certainly, or, I am not ſure. If it be on you, as ſhall yòu ride to town to-morrow? the queſtion implies that ſome one is to go, and do you mean to go yourſelf, or ſend ſome one in your ſtead? and the anſwer may be, No, but my ſervant ſhall. If on ride, as, ſhall you ride, &c.? the anſwer may be, No, I ſhall walk, or go in a coach. If on town, as, ſhall you ride to tow'n to-morrow? the anſwer may be, No, but I ſhall ride to the foreſt. If on to-morrow, as, ſhall you ride to town to-mòrrow? the anſwer may be, No, not to-morrow, but the next day.

As there is no pointing out the very meaning of the words by reading, without a proper obſervation of emphaſis, it ſurely has been a great defect in the art of writing, that there have been no marks invented for ſo neceſſary a purpoſe; as it requires at all times, a painful attention in the reader to the context, in order

to

to be able to do it at all; and in many caſes, the moſt ſevere attention will not anſwer the end; for the emphaſis is often to be regulated, not by the preceding part of the ſentence, but by the ſubſequent one; which frequently is ſo long, that the motion of the eye, cannot precede the voice, with ſufficient celerity, to take in the meaning in due time. The want of ſuch marks is no where ſo ſtrongly perceived as in the general manner of reading the Church Service; which is often ſo ill performed, that not only the beauty, and ſpirit of the ſervice is loſt, but the very meaning is obſcured, concealed, or wholly perverted. I have heard many clergymen, who did not read one ſingle ſentence as it ſhould be, from the beginning to the end; but I have known few who were not guilty of many faults in omitting, or miſplacing the emphaſis. And on this account it is, that there is no compoſition in the Engliſh tongue, which is at all attended to, ſo little underſtood, in general, as the Church Service. This would be obvious to any one, who would enter into a ſerious examination of the meaning of the ſervice, and compare it with the manner in which it is uſually delivered. Inſtances of impropriety might be furniſhed in abundance thro'-out the whole, but to give a few even at the firſt ſetting out, I mean in ſome of the verſes

from Scripture, that are read before the exhortation. Upon examining their true meaning, my hearers will judge whether they have ever heard that meaning expreſſed in the delivery. The uſual manner of reading the following text is this:

Enter nòt into judgment with thy ſer'vant, O Lord, for in thy s'ight, ſhall no man living be jus'tified.

Here the words nòt, ſer'vant, s'ight, jus'tified, between which it is impoſſible to find out any connection or dependance of one on the other, are principally marked. By theſe falſe emphaſes the mind is turned wholly from the main purport, and drift of the verſe. Upon hearing an emphaſis on the particle nòt, it expects quite another concluſion to make the meaning conſiſtent; and inſtead of the particle *for*, which begins the latter part of the ſentence, it would expect a *but*; as, enter nòt into judgment with thy ſervant, O Lord, *but* regard me with an eye of mercy. When it hears the emphaſis on ſer'vant, it expects another concluſion; as, enter not into judgment with thy ſer'vant, O Lord, but enter into judgment with thoſe who are not thy ſervants. The ſame alſo will be found in the emphaſes on the words *ſight*, and *juſtified*. So that the ſentence will ſeem to point at ſeveral different meanings, and

and to have no conſiſtency. But if it be read in the following manner, the meaning and connection will be obvious. Enter not into ju'dgment with thy ſervant" O Lord", for in thy' ſight, ſhall no man liv'ing be juſtified. Here we ſee the whole meaning is obvious, and that there is a great deal more implied, than the mere words could expreſs, without the aid of proper emphaſis. Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant, O Lord—That is, enter not, O Lord, into the ſeverity of judgment with thy creature, for in thy' ſight—which is all-piercing and can ſpy the ſmalleſt blemiſh—ſhall no man liv'ing be juſtified—No man on earth, no not the beſt ſhall be found perfect, or ſufficiently pure, to ſtand the examination, of the eye of purity itſelf.—For in th'y ſight ſhall no man liv'ing be juſtified. Upon this ſentence thus pronounced, the following beautiful paſſage in Job may be a comment.

How then can man be juſtified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of woman? Behold even to the moon, and it ſhineth not; yea the ſtars are not pure in his ſight. How much leſs man, that is a worm; and the ſon of man, which i's a worm.

The following verſe is generally pronounced in a manner equally faulty.

If we ſày that we have no ſi'n, we deceive ourſelv'es, and the truth is not i'n us; but if we confeſs our ſi'ns, He is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſi'ns, and to cleanſe us from all unrig'hteouſneſs.

" If we ſày that we have no ſi'n",—Here, by laying the ſtrong emphaſis on the word *ſay* we are led to a wrong meaning, as if we only ſaid it with our lips, but did not think ſo. How then can the concluſion follow of deceiving ourſelves? We may deceive others by ſaying what is falſe, but it is only by thinking falſely we can deceive ourſelves. Which is the true meaning of the words properly pronounced. I'f we ſay that we have nò ſi'n, we deceive ourſel'ves.—That is, I'f there be any amongſt us, ſo vainly blind to their own faults, as to imagine they are without ſin, they deceive themſelves. This ſentence is not an affirmative one, but conditional. It does not ſay that there are any ſuch amongſt us, but, *If* there be any ſuch; and therefore the conditional particle *If*, is in this caſe emphatical. I'f we ſay that we have nò ſi'n, we deceive ourſe'lves—and the truth is not i'n us. Here is another fault committed in laying the emphaſis on the words i'n us only, whilſt the word truth, which is the important one, is ſlightly paſſed over. And the truth is not i'n us. That is, the opinion entertained of

ourſelves

ourſelves is falſe. This ſtrong emphaſis laid only on the words i'n us, is the more unpardonable in thoſe who lay ſuch an emphaſis on the word ſay, becauſe it by no means follows that the truth is not in us, becauſe we ſay otherwiſe; a man may think the truth, and ſay the contrary; and this very phraſe proves the meaning of the text as before explained, that it relates to thinking, not ſaying; as it expreſsly ſays the truth is not *in* us, that is, we *think* falſely.

"But if we confeſs our ſi'ns"—Here again the falſe emphaſis is laid on the word *ſins*, whilſt the principal circumſtance that of confe'ſſing our ſins, is ſlightly paſſed over. But if we confe'ſs our ſins,—that is, if upon a thorough ſelf-examination, after having diſcovered our ſins, we make an humble acknowledgment of them, with a contrite heart, filled with penitence, and a thorough deſire and intention of reforming; (for all this is implied in the word confe'ſs, as no other ſort of confeſſion can be of any avail towards obtaining the conſequential grace promiſed from it.) How emphatical therefore ought this word to be which implies ſo much!

There is another word in this ſentence, which is hurried over as if it were a mere particle, when in this place it is a word of ſtrong import

import, I mean the word *but*. It is uſually read, bŭt if we confeſs our ſins, as if it were a mere diſjunctive particle. Whereas *but* in this ſituation ſtands in the place of the words, *on the other hand*, as may be ſeen by reading the two members of the ſentence and uniting them by thoſe words.

I'f we ſay, that we have nò ſi'n, we deceive ourſe'lves, and the truth' is not i'n us; on the other hand, if we confeſs our ſins——

But—therefore ſtanding in the place of words, ſhould be made emphatical, as all particles are when they are ſubſtituted in the place of words.

But, if we confeſs our ſin's, hĕ is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſin's——Who is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſi'ns? Could any one conceive that it is the great God of the Univerſe, who is here ſpoken of in ſo ſlight a way. Thro'out the whole ſervice indeed the awful name of God is treated ſo familiarly, and ſo little diſtinguiſhed even from any particle of three letters, as muſt give great offence to pious ears. It is ſaid of the great Robert Boyle, that he never mentioned the name of God, even in private diſcourſe, without making a perceptible pauſe after it. How much more would this practice become thoſe who are engaged in the ſolemn act of public worſhip, and how much would it add to the ſolemnity of that worſhip?

In this particular text, ſome peculiar manner of diſtinguiſhing the relative, which ſtands for the name of God, is more eſſentially neceſſary, becauſe his name was not before mentioned, and the ſentence cannot even be made ſenſe without it. The pronoun He, ſhould therefore be made very emphatical, and both be preceded, and ſucceeded by a perceptible pauſe; at the ſame time the eyes ſhould be devoutly raiſed towards heaven, to explain and enforce by the look, what is deficient in the expreſſion. But, if we confeſs our ſins, "He" is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſi'ns, &c. Theſe laſt words are generally as improperly read as the reſt. The chief emphaſis is here alſo often placed on the word ſi'ns, which not only mars the ſenſe, but produces a ſad cacaphonia, very diſagreeable to the ear, by the three ſucceſſive emphaſes on the word ſins in the ſame ſentence. As, " If we ſay we have no ſi'n, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confeſs our ſi'ns, He is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſi'ns, &c." The want of laying the proper emphaſis on the word *confeſs*, in the former part of the ſentence, produces the ſame miſtake in not laying it right on the word *forgive* in the latter, as the one is a conſequence of the other. If we confe'ſs our ſins, He will forgi've our ſins.

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The words, *faithful* and *juſt*, by being hurried over loſe their whole force and import. When properly pronounced, there is implied in them by means of emphaſis, that God has entered into a covenant with man that upon confeſſion and repentance he will forgive him his ſins; his faith and juſtice therefore are both engaged in the performance of this covenant. He" is fa'ithful, and ju'ſt, to forgiv'e us our ſins—and to cleanſe us from all unrig'hteouſneſs.

Here the emphaſis on the word unrighteouſneſs, is as unfortunately placed, as any of the others. For the emphaſis ought to be ſtronger both on the words cleanſe, and all; the meaning of the ſentence being, That God, upon our confeſſion and penitence, will not only forgive our ſins, but likewiſe cleanſe us, not from unrighteouſneſs only, but from a'll unrighteouſneſs. He will purify us entirely, ſo that no taint of our former ſins ſhall remain.

I ſhall now read the text in the two ways, firſt in the uſual manner, and afterwards in what I apprehend to be the right way, in order that the difference may be made more apparent.

If we ſa'y that we have no ſi'n, we deceive ourſe'lves, and the truth is not i'n us; but if we confeſs our ſi'ns, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſi'ns, and to cleanſe us from all unrig'hteouſneſs.

Now in the other way.

I'f we ſay that we have nò ſi'n, we deceive our'ſelves, and the tru'th is not in us: But", if we confe'ſs our ſins, "He" is fa'ithful, and ju'ſt, to forgi've us our ſins, and to clea'nſe us, from ā̄ll unrighteouſneſs.

Had there been proper marks invented for emphaſis, ſuch groſs errours could not have been committed. And many paſſages in authors, are on that account, unintelligible to moſt readers. To give a remarkable inſtance of this, in the play of Macbeth. There is a paſſage which, as it has been generally ſpoken on the ſtage, and read by moſt people, is downright nonſenſe; which yet in itſelf is a very fine one, and conveys an idea truly ſublime. I mean an expreſſion of Macbeth's after he has committed the murder, where he ſays,

Will all great Neptune's ocean waſh this blood
Clean from my hands? No—theſe my hands will rather,
The multitudinous ſea incarnadine,
Making the green one, red.

Now the laſt line pronounced in that manner, calling the ſea, the green one, makes flat nonſenſe of it. But if we read it with proper emphaſis and ſtop, and ſay, making the green—o'ne red. Here is a moſt ſublime idea conveyed, that his hands dipped into the ſea, would change

change the colour of the whole ocean from green to red; making the green—o'ne red. Nor, if we conſider the diſturbed ſtate of his imagination at that time, will this thought, hyperbolical as it may ſeem at firſt view, appear at all unnatural. For it is highly probable that his fancy at that inſtant preſented all objects about him as of that ſanguine hue; nay converted the very atmoſphere that ſurrounded him, into a ſea of blood.

Particles whenever they are emphatical change the meaning of the words from that which belongs to them as pronounced in the common way. Thus if we read this line of Othello in the following manner,

Put out the light, and then, put out the light;

it is nonſenſe. But by marking the particle thè in the repetition of the ſame words, a new idea and a new meaning is preſented to the mind.

Put out the light, and then put out *the* light.

That is, the light of life, put in oppoſition by force of this emphaſis, to the light of the candle.

Or elſe the emphaſis on particles introduces acceſſary ideas not expreſſed in the words; or marks the degrees of emotion better than it could be done otherwiſe. Of the firſt we have an inſtance in theſe lines of Tamerlane:

Can'ſt thou believe' thy prophet', or what's more
That power ſupreme that made thee' an'd thy prophet.

Under this emphaſis on the particle, an'd, is couched the following meaning; 'this prophet whom thou worſhippeſt, and to whom thou payeſt the chief honours, was only a creature like thyſelf, made by the ſame Almighty Being, and ſubject to the ſame laws.' Of the other we have an inſtance in this line of Othello:

Perdition catch my ſoul but I do lo've thee.

This is the uſual way of pronouncing that line, by which its peculiar beauty and force is loſt. But when it is repeated thus,

Excellent wench!
Perdition catch my ſoul but I dò love thee—

the emphaſis on dò, marks the vehemence of his affection, much better than any emphaſis on the verb love could. For when the emphaſis is laid on the verb love, *do*, becomes a mere expletive, being an unneceſſary ſign of the preſent tenſe. But when an emphaſis is placed on *do*, it becomes an auxiliary verb, ſignifying an act of the ſtrongeſt affirmation.

Emphaſis is of two kinds; ſimple or complex. Simple, when it ſerves only to point out the plain meaning of any propoſition: complex, when beſides the meaning, it marks alſo ſome affection or emotion of the mind; or gives a meaning to words, which they would not have

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in their uſual acceptation, without ſuch emphaſis. In the former caſe, emphaſis is little more than a ſtronger accent with but little change of tone; when it is complex, beſides force, there is always ſuperadded a manifeſt change of tone. Simple emphaſis belongs to the calm and compoſed underſtanding; complex, to the fancy and the paſſions.

By means of Emphaſis what paſſes in the mind is often ſhewn in a few words, which otherwiſe would require great circumlocution. Of which take the following inſtance from the play of All for Love.

——the fault was mine
To place thee there, where only, Thou, could'ſt fail.

In this ſcene Anthony, having found out that his friend Dolabella, whom he had employed on a commiſſion to Cleopatra, inſtead of diſcharging the truſt repoſed in him, had ſuffered his own paſſion for that dangerous beauty ſo far to prevail, as to give up his friend's cauſe, and urge his own love-ſuit to her; at firſt, upbraids Dolabella in the bittereſt terms for his treachery. But afterwards when he cools a little, and his affection for his friend begins to revive, he palliates the fault of Dolabella, and takes the blame to himſelf, by reflecting on the bewitching power of Cleopatra's charms, and that he ſhould not have expoſed his friend to a temp-

tation ſo irreſiſtible. Now let us ſee how much more there is implied in thoſe words, to be conveyed by the force of emphaſis, than could be if the words were uttered without it,

——the fault was mine
To place thee thère——

To place thee in ſo dangerous a ſituation; to give you an opportunity of a private interview with a woman of ſuch faſcinating charms.

——where on'ly——

The ſingle ſituation in the world in which

——Thou——

Thou who wert my boſom friend; thou whoſe perfect honour and fidelity I have approved thro'out our whole courſe of friendſhip on all other occaſions—

——coul'dſt fail.

could'ſt poſſibly have been found deficient in friendſhip or in duty.

It is this latter uſe of emphaſis chiefly that gives life and ſpirit to diſcourſe, and enables it to produce its nobleſt effects. By this it is that we have it in our power not only to make others conceive our ideas as we conceive them, but to make them alſo feel them, as we feel them. By the uſe of ſimple emphaſis, truths may be conveyed, and the underſtanding enlightened, if the hearer will be at the pains of commanding

commanding his own attention. But by the uſe of the complex kind, the affections and paſſions are excited, the fancy agitated, and the attention of the hearer engaged by the delight which accompanies the very act of attending. In the former, the mind is for the moſt part paſſive; a ſtate in which it cannot long remain, with ſatisfaction to itſelf. In the other its activity is rouſed, and it is conſcious of that activity, without any labour of its own; which is one of the moſt agreeable ſtates, that can be conceived, to the human mind, made up as it is of reſtleſſneſs and indolence. The mind thus conſtituted, grows equally weary of an inactive ſtate, or of much labour of its own; but delights in being exerciſed at the expence of the labour of others. And this is one of the chief reaſons, that dramatic repreſentations, have ever held the firſt rank amongſt the diverſions of mankind, from the effects which thoſe of the beſt kind produce, as deſcribed by Horace:

———pectus inaniter angit,
Irritat, mulcet, falſis terroribus implet
Ut magus, &c.

And on the ſame account the powers of oratory are reckoned amongſt the nobleſt that belong to human nature, and productive of the higheſt delight that the mind can receive. But as the powers of oratory cannot be at all exert-

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ed without the uſe of emphaſis; nor the paſſions of the hearers be roufed, or their minds intereſted in what is offered to them, without the uſe of the complex kind, *what* a pity it is that ſo little care is taken about ſo important an article in reading. For the right uſe of which there is neither any method known, nor rules laid down in our courſe of education; which is the chief reaſon that public reading is in general ſo diſguſting, and public ſpeaking ſo unaffecting. Whereas nothing would be more eaſy than to inſtruct children in the moſt perfect uſe of emphaſis, complex as well as ſimple, at the ſame time that they learn to read, and to make the ſame progreſs in the one, as in the other. The yet uncorrupt ear, and the flexible organs of ſpeech, would be capable of receiving, diſtinguiſhing, and uttering all the variety of tones in their juſt proportions, in the ſame manner as in ſinging; were there but preceptors equally qualified to teach them by rules, examples, and practice.

With regard to ſimple emphaſis, it is certain that every man, who clearly comprehends what he ſays in private diſcourſe, never fails to lay the emphaſis on the right word; when therefore he is about to read, or repeat the words of others, or his own, in public, let him only reflect on the place, where he would lay the emphaſis,

phaſis, ſuppoſing theſe words had proceeded from the immediate ſentiments of his own mind, in private diſcourſe; and he will have an infallible rule of laying the ſimple emphaſis right, in all ſentences, whoſe meaning he clearly comprehends. This rule is ſo obvious, and ſo eaſy to be obſerved, that it is aſtoniſhing to find every where, both in reading and reciting, ſuch an abuſe or neglect of emphaſis. But the cauſe of this is eaſily explained. In teaching to read by the eye, maſters inſtruct pupils in the uſe of ſuch marks as are preſented to the eye; now as there are no viſible ſigns but letters and ſtops, and as the words are diſtinguiſhed from each other, only by a greater diſtance between them than between the letters which compoſe them; and the different members of ſentences, by little crooked figures; the eye has no aſſiſtance in the two moſt important parts of reading, accent and emphaſis; and therefore in thoſe it is, that the chief blunders are committed. It is true, whoever is told that he is always to pronounce his words exactly with the ſame accent that he ſpeaks them, provided he be maſter of the right pronunciation, need not have any viſible mark to point out the accent; but even this eaſy rule is ſo ſeldom inculcated, that there are few free from errours in this reſpect; eſpecially when they attempt to

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read or recite any thing with more than uſual ſolemnity and pomp. But with reſpect to emphaſis, it is impoſſible to lay it right, unleſs a man firſt has clearly comprehended the meaning of what he is about to read; and as this is difficult to be done at ſight, after long practice and experience, even by the beſt readers; nay as it is impoſſible for them to do it without ſome errours, and never with the ſame degree of accuracy, as after a peruſal of what they are to read aloud, how much leſs are we to expect it from ſuch as are learners, even under the beſt inſtruction; but leaſt of all from thoſe, who are taught in ſuch a method, as does not make this a neceſſary part of reading. I appeal to the experience of mankind, whether in general, any thing elſe be taught, but the pronunciation of words and obſervation of the ſtops; and whether any one, who can readily give utterance to all words offered to the eye, and put them together, or ſeparate them, accordingly as the ſtops direct, does not think himſelf qualified to read any thing aloud at ſight, ſo as readily to undertake it in the hearing of any perſons when called upon? All this ariſes from a miſtake, which men naturally enough fall into, who judge of language only in its written ſtate; that ſentences are wholly compoſed of words and ſtops, becauſe there are no other viſible marks offered

offered to the eye; but the man who conſiders language in its primary and nobleſt ſtate, as offered to the ear, will find that the very life and ſoul of ſpeech, conſiſts in what is utterly unnoticed in writing, in accent and emphaſis: And as the man who attempts to pronounce words, without obſervation of accent, really does not utter words, but ſyllables; ſo the man who attempts to pronounce ſentences, without emphaſis, really does not utter ſentences, but words. So that in ſpeech, words are the body; pauſes and ſtops give it ſhape and form, and diſtinguiſh the ſeveral parts of the body; but accent and emphaſis, are the life, blood, and ſoul, which put it in motion, and give it power to act. And as nothing can be more tedious to the ear, or irkſome to the mind, than a long ſucceſſion of mere lifeleſs words, we need not wonder that our public readers and reciters, ſo inſtructed, are either ſo little attended to, or heard with diſguſt.

I would therefore recommend it to every one, who has any thing to read or recite in public, to reflect in what manner and with what kind of emphaſis, he would point out the meaning, if he were to deliver theſe words, as proceeding from the immediate ſentiments of his own mind. With this point in view he cannot fail of finding out the words, on which, in

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that caſe, he would lay the emphaſis. Let him therefore give a particular mark to thoſe words, ſuch as one of the accents uſed in Greek; that whenever he reads, he may be put in mind of laying a due ſtreſs on them, by thoſe viſible marks; otherwiſe he will be apt, from habit, to fall into his uſual manner of reading. And in every recital, when the words are well fixed in the memory, let the chief article of attention be, to lay the ſtreſs upon thoſe words only, which he had before ſo marked. And this I take to be the ſureſt and beſt way, of counteracting bad habits, ariſing from the very defective method, in which we are taught and practiſed in the manner of reading aloud and reciting.

If it be ſaid, that tho' in reading or reciting the works of others, men may be apt to make miſtakes in the article of emphaſis, yet when they deliver compoſitions of their own, or ſpeak their extemporaneous ſentiments in public, it is impoſſible they can be guilty of any ſuch errour, I believe upon examination the matter of fact would be found ſtrongly againſt this opinion. For I have known few authors, and many inſtances have fallen in my way, who did not read their own compoſitions, exactly in the ſame way as they would thoſe of any other writer; excepting perhaps their doing it with more

more emotion, and thereby rendering any abſurdity in their manner the more glaring. And with reſpect to extemporaneous ſpeaking in public, I have not known many inſtances in my life in which the artificial manner, got from a bad habit of reading, or imitations of others, has not ſupplanted the natural manner of ſpeaking; and even in the beſt, their delivery has in many parts been much affected by it. The man is apt to harangue his fellow citizens, much in the ſame way, as the boy was accuſtomed to recite before his ſchool-fellows; unleſs where nature breaks thro' the force of habit, when the heart of the ſpeaker is much engaged, in his ſubject, and when he delivers himſelf wholly from feeling. I have known ſome inſtances of this kind in reciting alſo on the ſtage, where the ſame performers, who in the unimpaſſioned and declamatory paſſages of their characters, were generally wrong in laying the emphaſis; whenever they entered into the more animated parts, and the paſſion which they repreſented took full poſſeſſion of them, were always right in that article.

If the uſe of the ſimple emphaſis, which has ſo plain, general, and certain a rule to point it out, be yet ſo miſtaken, what ſhall we ſay to that of the complex kind; which is infinitely more comprehenſive, intricate, and difficult; and yet is utterly without either rules, or ex-

amples to point out its true uſe? Tho' this is one of the moſt important branches of delivery, ſince the power of animating and affecting the hearers, depends much upon it. As words are marks of ideas, ſo are tones of energies and affections of the mind; and as we cannot make known our ideas to others, without a ſufficient number of words, to mark, not only their difference in groſs from each other, but alſo the nicer diſtinctions of degrees in the ſame idea, together with their various relations; ſo cannot we manifeſt, or communicate to others the ſeveral feelings of the mind, in conceiving and uttering its ideas, and the various proportions of thoſe feelings, without a ſuitable number, and equally regular and nice diſtinction of tones. But here art has entirely deſerted us, and left us to guide ourſelves as well as we can. And indeed all her exertions ſeem to have been confined within the bounds of written language, where ſhe has the faithful eye to guide her by ſure and fixed marks; nor has ſhe, hitherto amongſt us, dared to make any excurſions, into the more extenſive, and nobler provinces, of ſpoken language, the ways thro' which are to be found only by the information of the uncertain ear; which if not well inſtructed, and early cultivated, muſt ever prove a falſe guide. Hence it comes to paſs, that words, as marks of our ideas, are tolerably well regulated,

regulated, and reduced to order; whilſt tones, the marks of our feelings, are left wholly to chance. The natural conſequence of which has been that many diſcourſes, good in themſelves, are pronounced without affecting the hearers; and that in a nation abounding in good writers, a good ſpeaker is a prodigy. But of this I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more at large under the head of Tones. At preſent I ſhall content myſelf with cloſing this head, by laying down the only rule, which appears to me to be of any conſiderable benefit in practice, towards making the beſt uſe that can be, as things are now circumſtanced, of the complex emphaſis. And that is directly the ſame rule before laid down with regard to the ſimple emphaſis; that every one ſhould content himſelf with the uſe of thoſe tones only that he is habituated to in ſpeech, and to give none other to emphaſis, but what he would do to the ſame words in diſcourſe. Thus whatever he utters will be done with eaſe, and appear natural; whereas if he endeavours at any tones, to which he is not accuſtomed, either from fancy, or imitation of others, it will be done with difficulty, and carry with it evident marks of affectation and art, which are ever diſguſting to the hearer, and never fail to defeat the end of the ſpeaker.

LECTURE V.

Of PAUSES or STOPS.

THE next head of which I am to treat, is that of Pauſes, or Stops.

Stops or pauſes, are a total ceſſation of ſound during a perceptible, and in numerous compoſitions, a meaſurable ſpace of time. The uſe of theſe is equally neceſſary to the ſpeaker, and to the hearer. To the ſpeaker, that he may take breath, without which he cannot proceed far in delivery; and that he may relieve the organs of ſpeech, by theſe temporary reſts, which otherwiſe would be ſoon tired by continued and uninterrupted action: To the hearer, that the ear alſo may be relieved from the fatigue, which it would otherwiſe endure from a continuity of ſound; and that the underſtanding may have ſufficient time to mark the diſtinction of ſentences, and their ſeveral members. Theſe pauſes being thus neceſſary and uſeful, become ornamental alſo in verſe, when reduced to exact proportions of time, in the ſame way as in muſic.

But

But as in common diſcourſe, and in moſt compoſitions in proſe, there is no neceſſity to obſerve ſuch nice proportion of pauſes, they have beſides their duration, marks of a ſurer kind annexed to them, to point out their nature; and theſe are, certain notes of the voice, which declare of what kind the pauſes are, at the inſtant they are made; and inform the mind what it is to expect from them; whether the ſenſe is ſtill to be continued in the ſame ſentence; whether the ſucceeding one is to be the laſt member of the ſentence; whether more are to enſue; or whether the ſentence be cloſed, and a new one is to begin.

The great utility of this practice will appear, when we conſider how neceſſary it is that the hearer ſhould be able to accompany the ſpeaker in all that he utters, ſo as fully to comprehend his meaning; and therefore he ſhould be ſpared the trouble of attending to any thing elſe, but his meaning. Now if pauſes had no other mark of diſtinction, but the time of their duration, it is evident that not only the ſpeaker, muſt always be exceedingly nice, in obſerving the exacteſt proportion of time, with regard to the different pauſes, (a thing ſcarce practicable in irregular diſcourſe) but the hearer alſo, muſt employ his whole attention, during thoſe pauſes, in meaſuring their exact duration, with-

out which he muſt miſtake their nature; a thing equally impracticable, or which if attempted, muſt by this diſtraction of the attention, do great injury to the principal point in view, a full conception of the meaning. Whereas, when the nature or kind of pauſe, is declared at its beginning, by the ſure mark of a note or tone of the voice, it matters not afterwards to the hearer, whether the ſpeaker obſerves any due proportion of time or not; for he is at that inſtant prepared to accompany him, whenever he pleaſes to ſet out; whether it be ſuddenly, or whether he chuſes to delay longer than is neceſſary. For he knows by the tone what the pauſe ſhould be, whether the ſpeaker obſerves the due proportion of time or not.

It is true in poetical compoſitions, the ſkilful ear will not be ſatisfied, without a due obſervation of the proportion of pauſes, as well as ſounds; but it is becauſe in that caſe, it has a right to be pleaſed itſelf, at the ſame that it is the inſtrument of conveying the meaning to the underſtanding, and its diſguſt ariſes from the diſappointment. But the intereſts of the underſtanding receive no farther prejudice, the notes or tones ſtill proving ſure guides to the ſenſe, than what may ariſe from want of attention, occaſioned by ſuch diſguſt of the ear.

But

But in all ſpeeches and harangues that are more looſe, and free from the fetters of meaſure, this circumſtance has given the ſpeaker ſuch a power over the pauſes, as, judiciouſly uſed, may contribute much to the main point in view, that of ſtrongly inculcating his meaning. For by this means, he may always proportion his pauſes to the importance of the ſenſe, and not merely to the grammatical ſtructure of words in ſentences, making like pauſes to all of like ſtructure, without diſtinction. For inſtance, if there be any propoſition or ſentiment which he would enforce more ſtrongly than the reſt, he may either precede it by a longer pauſe than uſual, which will rouſe attention, and give it the more weight when it is delivered; or he may make a longer pauſe after it is cloſed, which will give time for the mind to ruminate upon it, and let it ſink deeper into it by ſuch reflection; or according to the importance of the point, he may do both. He may go ſtill farther, and make a pauſe before ſome very emphatical word, where neither the ſenſe nor common uſage would admit of any; but this liberty is to be uſed with great caution. For as ſuch pauſes excite uncommon attention, and of courſe raiſe expectation, if the importance of the matter be not fully anſwerable to ſuch expectation, it will occaſion diſappointment and diſguſt. This li-

berty therefore is to be ſeldom taken, and never but where ſomething extraordinary and new is offered to the mind, which is likely to be attended with an agreeable ſurpriſe. For pauſes of this ſort put the mind into a ſtate of ſuſpenſe, which is ever attended with an uneaſy ſenſation, and for which it will always expect to have compenſation made, by a greater degree of pleaſure, than it otherwiſe could have had.

But in the uſe of the tones which mark the pauſes, great care muſt be taken to avoid thoſe two artificial tones, with which every one is taught to read; the bad effects of which I need not now expatiate on, having ſhewn them at large in my firſt lecture. And as this is one of the chief ſources of the diſguſting monotony, and unnatural manner of delivery, which is ſo generally complained of in our public readers and ſpeakers, too much pains cannot be taken to get the better of it. The truth is that the tones which mark the pauſes in ſpeaking, have an infinite variety, according to the matter of the diſcourſe, and diſpoſition of mind in the ſpeaker; whereas thoſe in reading, as I ſhewed before, are reduced to two. I would therefore recommend it to every perſon who has any thing to deliver in public, to make uſe of the ſame rule for his guide with regard to the tones belonging to the ſtops, as was before laid down

with

with regard to thoſe appertaining to the complex emphaſis, and for the ſame reaſons; becauſe he is maſter of theſe, he will do it with eaſe; his delivery will appear natural, and free from all marks of affectation.

By means of theſe tones that mark the pauſes, readers may at any time, when they find it neceſſary, take breath even at the ſmalleſt pauſe, without prejudice to the ſenſe; as the tone, ſufficiently marks the nature of the pauſe, without reference to time: but in this care is to be taken by the ſpeaker that the true tone be given to the pauſe at the time it is made, for thus the hearer will have notice that the ſentence is not cloſed, and his attention is only ſuſpended, without perplexing his underſtanding. And he may have a ſure rule for uſing the true tone, by giving exactly the ſame one that he would, were he to proceed more quickly to the next member of the ſentence, and were not to make a longer ſtop than ordinary. The want of knowing this circumſtance, or rather the falſe rule by which people are inſtructed, that the breath is never to be drawn, but when there is a full ſtop or cloſe of the ſenſe, has made it exceedingly difficult to many to utter long ſentences, and impoſſible to thoſe who are ſhort-winded. They are therefore either apt to run themſelves entirely out of breath, (which is always diſagree-

able, deſtroying all force and grace) and not to ſtop till neceſſity obliges them to it from failure of breath; which is therefore likely to happen in improper places: Or elſe they ſubdivide the long ſentence, into as many diſtinct ſentences, as they make times of breathing, to the utter confuſion of the ſenſe. For as they have been taught, not to take breath, but when they make a full ſtop, they habitually uſe the tone of a full ſtop, whenever they take breath. It is of as much importance to a ſpeaker, that he ſhould have at all times a ſufficient command of breath, as that an organ ſhould be ſupplied with a proper quantity of air; nothing therefore can be of more moment to him than the practice of the rule which I have laid down, as it will enable all who do not labour under ſome great infirmity in point of breathing, to go thro' the longeſt periods, without any perceptible defect of that kind.

There is no article in reading more difficult than that of obſerving a due proportion of ſtops, occaſioned by the very erroneous and inaccurate manner, in which they are marked by printers and writers. Stopping, like ſpelling, has at different periods of time, and by different perſons, been conſidered in a great meaſure as arbitrary, and has had its different faſhions; and theſe faſhions have been ſpread, and become general, by being adopted by the

printers

printers moſt in vogue. The art of punctuation is of modern invention, and probably was not known, previous to the diſcovery of printing, at leaſt we are ſure that the Ancients made not any uſe of ſtops in their writing. A plain proof of what I aſſerted in my firſt lecture, that the art of writing amongſt the Ancients, was not calculated for the uſe we put it to, of reading works aloud to auditors, but only to enable the ſpeaker to get the words by rote, in order that he might recite them from memory. And happy had it been for the ſtate of modern elocution, that the art had ſtill remained unknown; for then every one who had any thing to deliver in public, muſt, like the Ancients, have been obliged either to recite it without book, or apply himſelf cloſely to ſtudy the meaning of what he had to read, ſo as to be able to deliver it properly. Nor ſhould we then have had thoſe reading tones, before mentioned, which have been annexed to the ſtops; nor thoſe falſe pauſes and reſts of the voice, which have been introduced by falſe punctuation: But every one, having no rules to miſguide him, would of courſe follow the obvious one, that of reading words as he would ſpeak them.

It is evident that to mark the ſtops properly in writing, every perceptible ceſſation of ſound in the voice ought to have a mark; but this is far

far from being the caſe in the preſent practice of punctuation, continual inſtances occurring, where the voice ought to be ſuſpended, without any comma appearing; and inſtances as frequent, where commas are put down in places, where there ought to be no ſuſpenſion of the voice. The truth is, the modern art of punctuation was not taken from the art of ſpeaking, which was never ſtudied by the moderns, but was in a great meaſure regulated by the rules of grammar; that is, certain parts of ſpeech are kept together, and others divided by ſtops, according to their grammatical conſtruction, often without reference to the pauſes uſed in diſcourſe. And the only general rule by which pauſes can be regulated has been either unknown or unattended to: which is, that pauſes in general depend upon emphaſis. I have already ſhewn that words are ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed from each other by accent; but to point out their meaning when ranged in ſentences, emphaſis and pauſes are neceſſary. Accent is the link which connects ſyllables together, and forms them into words; Emphaſis is the link which connects words together, and forms them into members of ſentences; but that there may be no miſtake to which emphaſis the words belong, at the end of every ſuch member of a ſentence there ought to be a perceptible

ble pauſe. If it be aſked why a pauſe ſhould be any more neceſſary to emphaſis than to accent, or why emphaſis alone will not ſufficiently diſtinguiſh the members of ſentences without pauſes, as accent does words from each other; the anſwer is obvious, that we are pre-acquainted with the ſounds of the words, and cannot miſtake them when diſtinctly pronounced, however rapidly; but we are not pre-acquainted with the meaning of ſentences, which muſt be pointed out to us by the ſpeaker; and as this can only be done by evidently ſhewing what words belong to the emphatic one, unleſs we make a pauſe at the end of the laſt word belonging to the former emphatic one, we ſhall not be able to know at all times whether the intermediate words between two emphatic ones, appertain to the former or the latter; which muſt breed a perpetual confuſion in the ſenſe. This will be ſufficiently illuſtrated by two of the examples given in my former upon Emphaſis: for in the line quoted from Macbeth, had they placed a comma at the end of the word *green*, as thus—

Making the green, one red——

the ſenſe could not have been miſtaken. And had they placed three commas in the line quoted from All for Love, as thus—

To place thee there, where only, thou, couldſt fail——

the

the full import of the paſſage would have been at once perceived. Whoever therefore has a mind to read any piece correctly, muſt ſtop according to this rule. Let him firſt find out and mark each emphatic word; then let him examine what number of words belong to that emphatic one, and at the laſt of thoſe let him place a comma, or ſuch other ſtop as the ſenſe requires. The tones appertaining to theſe pauſes, and the time taken up in them, muſt be left to his own judgment; and his beſt rule will be to reflect what tones he would uſe, and what time he would ſuſpend his voice, were he to ſpeak them as his own immediate ſentiments. And whoever reads any thing at ſight, would do well to pay as little regard to the ſtops as poſſible, and be chiefly attentive to the meaning of the words.

Of the PITCH and MANAGEMENT of the VOICE.

The next points I am to treat of, are the pitch and management of the voice; articles of the utmoſt importance to give due force and proportion to all the others. To the being heard with ſatisfaction, it is neceſſary that the ſpeaker ſhould deliver himſelf with eaſe. But if he does not know how to pitch his voice properly, he can never have the due manage-

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ment of it; and his utterance will be painful to himſelf, and irkſome to his hearers.

Every ſpeaker who is not corrupted by bad habit, has three pitches in his voice, the high, low, and middle pitch. The middle pitch is that which is uſed in ordinary diſcourſe, from which he either riſes or falls according as the matter of his diſcourſe, or emotions of his mind require. This middle pitch therefore is what ought to be generally uſed, for two reaſons; firſt, becauſe the organs of the voice are ſtronger, and more pliable in this pitch, from conſtant uſe: And ſecondly, becauſe it is more eaſy to riſe or fall from that pitch, to high or low, with regular proportion.

Moſt perſons, thro' want of ſkill and practice, when they read or ſpeak in public, fall into one of the extremes. Either thro' timidity and diffidence they uſe the low pitch, in which they are not heard at all, or with ſo much trouble to the liſtener, as ſoon to weary attention; or if they aim at avoiding this fault, they run into the high pitch; which is productive of conſequences equally bad. The organs of the voice, in this unuſual pitch, are ſoon wearied, and languor and hoarſeneſs enſue. And as the reaſon for continuing it, will be equally ſtrong during the whole diſcourſe, as for the firſt ſetting out in it, the ſpeaker muſt loſe all the benefits

nefits which ariſe from variety, and fall into a diſguſting monotony.

The prevalence of this practice ariſes from a common miſtake in thoſe who ſpeak for the firſt time in a large room, and before a numerous auditory. They conclude it impoſſible that they ſhould be heard in their common pitch of voice, and therefore change it to a higher. Thus they confound two very diſtinct things, making high and low, the ſame with loud and ſoft.

Loud and ſoft in ſpeaking, is like the *fortè* and *piano* in muſic, it only refers to the different degrees of force uſed in the ſame key: whereas high and low imply a change of key. A man may ſpeak louder or ſofter in the ſame key; when he ſpeaks higher or lower, he changes his key. So that the buſineſs of every one is to proportion the force or loudneſs of voice, to the room, and number of his auditory, in its uſual pitch. If it be larger than ordinary, he is to ſpeak louder, not higher; in his uſual key, not in a new one. And whoever neglects this, will never be able to manage his voice with eaſe to himſelf, or pleaſure to his hearers.

It is evident that he who begins in the high pitch on a ſuppoſition that he could not otherwiſe be heard, muſt for the ſame reaſon continue in that pitch throughout. And they who

ſet out under this deluſion are apt to continue in it all their lives, having but little chance of being informed of their errour. So that whenever they deliver any thing in public they of courſe fall into this unnatural key.

This errour is no where more obſervable than in the uſual manner of reading Divine Service. The unnatural pitch of voice, is the firſt thing that ſtrikes every judicious ear, in the firſt ſentence the clergyman utters, which is continued throughout; nor have I heard many in my life who read the Service in their own proper pitch. The quantity of ſound, neceſſary to fill even a large ſpace, is much ſmaller than is generally imagined; and to the being well heard, and clearly underſtood, a good and diſtinct articulation, contributes more, than power of voice. Poſſeſſed of that, a man with a weak voice, has infinite advantages over the ſtrongeſt without it. If the voice be weak, and the articulation good, the attention and ſilence of the auditory will be proportionally greater, that they may not miſs any thing that is ſaid; whereas they are under no ſuch apprehenſions from a loud ſpeaker. He who delivers himſelf in a moderate pitch, whenever his ſubject demands that he ſhould riſe to a higher, or ſink to a lower, does it with eaſe and due proportion; and produces the effects which are to be

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expected from such change, and agreeable variety. Whilst he who takes a high pitch, cannot rise upon occasion without running into discord, nor sink with any rule of proportion to guide him. They who to avoid this fault run into the opposite extreme, and begin in a lower pitch than is natural to them, err indeed of the safer side, but are equally distant from the point of truth. It is true it is more easy to rise gradually and proportionally than to descend; but whilst they remain in that key, it will appear equally unnatural, and more languid than the other. And they will be very apt thro' the body of their discourse, to run chiefly into that key, in which they had set out. The true, safe, and sure rule (unless upon extraordinary occasions indeed) is always to begin in your usual pitch of speaking; if that should not prove strong enough, strengthen it by practice; if there be such a natural weakness in the organs as that you cannot be heard in public assemblies in that pitch, you had better give over all thoughts of appearing in them; or if your profession obliges you to it, you must give up all hopes of speaking gracefully, and agreeably, or even intelligibly. For he who is obliged to strain his voice, in order to be heard, will scarce articulate well. The office of articulation is of a very delicate nature, and requires

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that the organs which perform it, ſhould not be diſturbed, or ſuffer any violence; which muſt always be the caſe when the voice is puſhed out upon them with uncommon force. I have known inſtances of perſons with very ſtrong voices, of whom in their utmoſt exertions of them, it has been very juſtly obſerved, that there was no hearing what they ſaid, they ſpoke ſo loud; for the torrent of the voice, left neither time nor power in the organs, to ſhape the words properly, but bore away with it cluſtered and uncouth maſſes of abortive ſyllables.

The beſt rule for a ſpeaker to obſerve is, never to utter a greater quantity of voice, than he can afford without pain to himſelf, or any extraordinary effort. Whilſt he does this, the other organs of ſpeech will be at liberty to diſcharge their ſeveral offices with eaſe; and he will always have his voice under command. But whenever he tranſgreſſes theſe bounds, he gives up the reins, and has no longer any management of it. And it will ever be the ſafeſt way too, to keep within his compaſs, rather than go at any time to the utmoſt extent of it; which is a dangerous experiment, and never juſtifiable but upon ſome extraordinary emotion. For even in that caſe, the tranſgreſſing the limits in the leaſt, (difficult as the taſk is for a ſpeaker to keep within bounds, when un-

der the influence of ſuch emotion) will ſcarce be pardoned: For, as the judicious Shakeſpear has well obſerved in his inſtructions to the player, '*In the very torrent, tempeſt, and as I may* '*ſay whirlwind of your paſſion, you muſt acquire and* '*beget a temperance that may give it ſmoothneſs.*' For the ſame reaſon alſo, every ſpeaker ſhould take care in the management of the breath, always to get a freſh ſupply before he feels any want of it; for whilſt he has ſome to ſpare, he recruits it with ſuch eaſe, that his hearers are not at all ſenſible of his doing it. Whereas if he waits till he is put in mind of it by any degree of uneaſineſs, he not only does it with more difficulty to himſelf, but he may depend upon it that his hearers alſo have felt his uneaſineſs, and been ſenſible of his difficulty. For ſo ſtrong is the ſympathy between the organs of ſpeech, and thoſe of hearing, that the leaſt uneaſineſs in the one, is immediately perceived by the other.

I ſhall cloſe my obſervations on this head with two rules; one, for giving ſtrength and power to the voice in its natural pitch. The other for adjuſting the proper quantity or degree of loudneſs in the voice, proportioned to the ſize of the room and the number of the auditory. The firſt rule for ſtrengthening the voice, is this. Any one, who thro' habit, has

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fallen into a weak utterance, cannot hope ſuddenly to change it; he muſt do it by degrees and conſtant practice. I would therefore recommend it to him, that he ſhould daily exerciſe himſelf in reading, or repeating in the hearing of a friend; and that too in a large room. At firſt his friend ſhould ſtand at ſuch a diſtance only, as the ſpeaker can eaſily reach, in his uſual manner of delivering himſelf. Afterwards let him gradually increaſe his diſtance, and the ſpeaker will in the ſame gradual proportion increaſe the force of the voice; for the method of increaſing by degrees is eaſy in this as in every thing elſe, when ſudden tranſitions are impracticable; and every new acquiſition of power, enables you the better to go on to the next degree. When he ſhall have thus got to that diſtance, beyond which the ſpeaker cannot be heard without ſtraining, and forcing his voice, there let him ſtop; and let that be the uſual place of his ſtanding to hear the moſt part of what is declaimed; becauſe when the ſpeaker, is able by practice to manage his voice in that extent, he will certainly be able to command it in all the inferiour degrees. Tho' for the more gradual unfolding of the organs, and regular increaſe of the quantity of the voice, it will be always right for the hearer to begin at each day's exerciſe with the ſhorteſt diſtance, and

increaſe it by degrees till he arrives at the utmoſt; in which ſituation, for the reaſon before aſſigned, the chief part of the exerciſe ought to be performed.

The ſecond rule for giving a proper degree of loudneſs, or iſſuing a ſufficient quantity of voice proportioned to the room and the audience, which is commonly called pitching the voice, is this. Let the ſpeaker after having looked round the aſſembly, fix his eyes on that part of his auditory which is fartheſt from him, and he will mechanically endeavour to pitch his voice ſo as that it may reach them. This is what we conſtantly practice in common diſcourſe, for we always proportion the loudneſs or ſoftneſs of voice, to the diſtance of the perſon to whom we are ſpeaking. When the ſpeaker therefore ſhall have fixed his eye upon the moſt diſtant part of his audience, his buſineſs is to conſider himſelf as addreſſing his diſcourſe to ſome one amongſt them, in ſuch a manner as that he may be heard by him, and if the perſon be not beyond the reach of his voice, he will not fail to effect it. But ſtill he is to take care not to change his uſual pitch in order to do this, but only to add force or degrees of loudneſs in proportion to the diſtance. This is what we do in life when we call after any perſon to come back; we add loudneſs to

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our voice according to the diſtance he has got from us, but we never change the key, or bawl, till we find that he has got ſo far, as that his ear cannot be reached by the natural pitch of our voice. He therefore who ſets out in a higher key than is natural to him, in order that he may be heard by the moſt diſtant, may be juſtly ſaid to bawl out his diſcourſe, but not to deliver it.

There is another material circumſtance to be attended to in pitching the voice, which ariſes from the conſtruction of the room in which you are to ſpeak; ſome being admirably contrived for the purpoſe of ſpeaking, and others quite the contrary. Of courſe in the former, a much ſmaller quantity of voice will do, than in the latter. The firſt object of every ſpeaker, ought to be to find out whether his voice can fill the room or not; and afterwards to proportion the quantity of it accordingly. By filling a room with the voice is meant, when there is ſuch a quantity of it uttered, as not only will reach the extremities, but return alſo to the ſpeaker. And a room may be ſaid to be well conſtructed for ſpeaking when this is effected by a moderate exertion of a common voice. The two extremes are when either a room thro' its ſize, or ill conſtruction, will admit of no reverberation, or when the reverberation is made by an echo. I ſhall endeavour to find out what is beſt to be

done in the three caſes. In the firſt caſe when the ſpeaker can fill the room with his voice, his buſineſs is to find out what quantity will be ſufficient to do it; that he may neither unneceſſarily waſte his voice by throwing out too much, nor diminiſh his power by uſing too little; but that he may have a perfect command and management of it, according to the different degrees of exertion, which may be required in the different parts of his diſcourſe. The beſt way of finding this out, will be, to begin with a moderate quantity of voice, and to increaſe it gradually, till the ſpeaker finds out the degree of loudneſs, that is neceſſary to fill the room; which will be diſcovered to him by the return of the ſound to his own ear, as ſoon as he has arrived at the proper pitch. With this degree or quantity of voice he is to deliver all the more forcible, ſpirited, and impaſſioned parts of his diſcourſe. For tho' he may be diſtinctly heard with a ſmaller exertion, yet it will not be in a manner ſo ſatisfactory to the hearer. Every ſpeaker therefore in a well conſtructed room, which is not too large for his powers, may have an infallible criterion by which to judge of that point, as he may be ſure that he has filled the ears of his auditory, when he has filled the room; and he may certainly know when he has filled the room, by the return of his voice

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to his own ear. This is one of the moſt valuable pieces of management that a public ſpeaker can poſſeſs, and of which, with due attention, and a little practice, he may eaſily become maſter. This rule is on a ſuppoſition that the room is ſo conſtructed as to return the ſound gently and equably, without any perceptible echo.

But in the ſecond caſe where the ſound is ſuddenly reverberated by an echo, the difficulty to the ſpeaker is much increaſed. Nothing is more apt to miſlead the unwary and unſkilful ſpeaker, than this circumſtance in a room; for as his voice ſounds much louder to himſelf on that account, he is apt to conclude that he is the better heard: whereas the very thing which adds to the loudneſs, deſtroys articulation and diſtinction of utterance, which are eſſentially neceſſary to the being underſtood. For the quick and ſudden reverberation of the ſounds which have been uttered, makes ſuch a jumble with thoſe which are uttering, that the whole appears a confuſed babble of ſomething like words indeed, but utterly unintelligible. In the former caſe, when the room is well conſtructed for ſpeaking, the return of the voice is made in a moderate and equable manner; in the latter, it rebounds like a tennis-ball. In the firſt caſe, the undulation of ſound reſembles the circles made in a ſmooth water by the gentle

dropping in of a pebble, where all gradually increaſe in their circumference, and are regular in their figures; the other reſembles the motion of the water, when a ſtone is daſhed violently into it, where all is irregular and confuſed. Nothing can ſhew the ignorance which prevails in the art of ſpeaking in this age in a ſtronger light than this very circumſtance; for there have been few rooms built for the purpoſe of ſpeaking, in which the contrivers have not endeavoured by artificial means to procure as ſtrong an echo as poſſible, in order to aſſiſt the ſpeaker, when it is of all others the greateſt hinderance to him. Whoever therefore has the misfortune to be under a neceſſity of ſpeaking in a room of that ſort, has no remedy but this. He muſt leſſen the quantity of his voice till he finds no perceptible echo. It is true this will put it out of his power to exert himſelf, but all he can hope for in ſuch circumſtances is to be heard and underſtood; energy he muſt wholly give up, at leaſt it muſt be confined to very ſmall degrees.

There is another kind of echo in ſome rooms, which does not ſuddenly reverberate the ſounds, but takes up ſome interval of time. Here the ſpeaker muſt take care to be much ſlower, and diſtinct in his utterance than uſual, and to make his pauſes longer. He is to attend to the returning

turning ſound, and not to begin after a pauſe till the ſound is ceaſed.

The third caſe is, when a room is ſo large or ſo ill conſtructed, that the voice of the ſpeaker is loſt, before it reaches the extremities, or ſo far ſpent, that it has not force enough to return to him. There are many enormous buildings of this kind, ſuch as the old abbeys, cathedrals, and halls, in which the ſpeaker has no more advantage from being covered, than if he were in the open air. The only rule the ſpeaker has here, is what was firſt mentioned, that of fixing his eyes on the moſt diſtant part of his auditory, and endeavouring to make himſelf heard by them in his natural compaſs; but if that cannot be, he is to deliver himſelf to the reſt with as much force of voice as he can uſe without ſtraining. Beſide thoſe which have been already mentioned, there are ſome rooms too ſpacious to make any return of the voice from the extremities, which yet have, from the hollowneſs of the ground underneath, a ſtrong echo. This is the caſe in many of our cathedrals. Whatever ſpeaker has the misfortune to be obliged to deliver himſelf in one theſe, has nothing for it, but to ſubmit to neceſſity, and to get thro' his work as well as he can.

LECTURE VI.

TONES.

THUS far, I have conſidered the ſeveral points, that are fundamentally, and eſſentially neceſſary, to every public ſpeaker; without which, he will be ſo far from making any impreſſion on his hearers, that he will not be able to command their attention, nor, in many caſes, even make himſelf underſtood.

Yet ſo low is the ſtate of elocution amongſt us, that a man who is maſter even of theſe rudiments of rhetoric, is comparatively conſidered, as one of an excellent delivery. This very circumſtance therefore, is a ſufficient inducement, to apply cloſely, at leaſt to the maſtery of theſe points.

But when a man has got ſo far, as I can ſee no reaſon that he ſhould ſtop there, or that he ſhould not farther endeavour, to make himſelf maſter of every thing, which can add grace or force to his delivery; I ſhall now attempt to lay open the principles, that may ſerve as guides

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to him, in the uſe of the two remaining articles, tones, and geſture: upon which, all that is pleaſurable, or affecting in elocution, chiefly depend.

Before I enter upon the ſubject of tones, it will be neceſſary to fix, the preciſe meaning of the the term language; to know what it comprehends, and what are its bounds.

I dare ſay there are few, who would not think it an affront offered to their underſtandings, if they were aſked, 'what they mean by the term language?' as being a thing, which every rational creature, is ſuppoſed neceſſarily to know. And I fancy, upon ſuch a queſtion's being propoſed, the firſt thought that would occur to every one, who had not properly conſidered the point, is, that language is compoſed of words. And yet, this is ſo far from being an adequate idea of language, that the point in which moſt men think its very eſſence to conſiſt, is not even a neceſſary property of language. For language, in its full extent, means, any way or method whatſoever, by which all that paſſes in the mind of one man, may be manifeſted to another. And as this is chiefly done by an agreement in the uſe of certain ſigns, it is no matter what thoſe ſigns are; there being little or no natural connection, between any verbal ſigns and our ideas, which

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is ſufficiently evinced, by the variety of languages that are ſpoken, in the different countries of the world.

It is true, the facility with which the communication is carried on, by means of the organs of ſpeech, preferably to any other method; together with ſome other reaſons, which need not here be enumerated, have made mankind in general agree, in making articulate ſounds or words, the ſymbols of their ideas; but we have ample proof, that this did not ariſe from a principle of neceſſity, but conveniency. For they who are born deaf, can make themſelves underſtood by viſible ſigns; and we have it on the beſt authority, that the Mimes of the Ancients, were perfectly intelligible, without the uſe of words. But why need I mention theſe, when every one who can read knows, that our thoughts may be communicated by viſible marks, as well as by articulate ſounds?

I am aware it will be ſaid, that written language is only a copy of that which is ſpoken, and has a conſtant reference to articulation; the characters upon paper, being only ſymbols of articulate ſounds.

But tho' all who are bleſt with the gift of ſpeech, by conſtantly aſſociating the ideas of articulate ſounds, to thoſe characters which they ſee on paper, come to imagine that there

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is a neceſſary connection between them, and that the one, is merely a ſymbol of the other; yet, that it is in itſelf, a manner of communication entirely different, and utterly independent of the other, we have ample demonſtration from this; that it can be perfectly underſtood by thoſe, who never had, nor ever could have, the leaſt idea of articulate ſound. This has been fully proved, in the caſe of many perſons born deaf, who yet could read, and underſtand written language perfectly well, and write their thoughts with accuracy.

It may at firſt view be thought, that I am labouring a point, of little or no conſequence, farther than ſpeculation; but as I think I ſhall be able to ſhew, that this fundamental errour with regard to our general idea of language, in confining it to ſuch narrow bounds, has had a remarkable effect upon our practice; and that ſome of its nobleſt uſes have been loſt to us, thro' the want of a juſt notion of its comprehenſion; it muſt be granted, that before I proceed, it will be neceſſary, in the fulleſt manner, to clear up that point. The allowed utility of any meaſure muſt be the firſt inducement, to enter on the purſuit of it; and the reaſonableneſs of it muſt be ſhewn, before its utility will be allowed.

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In civilized countries, poſſeſſed of the collected wiſdom of ages in books, the learned think they know, or have it in their power to know every thing that it is poſſible for the human mind to be acquainted with. In vain have ſeveral new and important diſcoveries, made in latter ages, as well as in our own times, ſhewn how ill founded this opinion is. Learned vanity, which exceeds that of every other kind, ſtill takes up arms againſt any thing that is offered as new. And even amongſt the moſt candid, on account of the many pretenſions that have been made to new diſcoveries, which have ended in ſmoke, the underſtanding is exceedingly on its guard, on ſuch occaſions; doubts of every thing that is offered to it, which does not carry conviction; and will ſcarcely admit of any concluſion, that does not amount to demonſtration. This is the caſe even in ſubjects that are in themſelves new, and which therefore have no prejudices to encounter: But when the ſubject happens to be of that kind which is open to all the world; which has not only been an object of enquiry and examination, in theory, but is alſo to be viewed in univerſal practice; and therefore is of that ſort, about which all mankind have formed certain opinions, or judgments; it is evident, that the prepoſſeſſions to be encountered in

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that caſe, muſt be much ſtronger; and that nothing is likely to remove them, but neceſſary concluſions, drawn from ſelf-evident premiſes.

Of this nature, is the ſubject of language; which being uſed by all mankind, is of all others, the ſubject which mankind in general, think themſelves beſt acquainted with, and that, of which they have the cleareſt and fulleſt comprehenſion. And yet it is of all others, that of which the moſt erroneous opinions are entertained, and with whoſe true nature, mankind in general are leaſt acquainted. The reaſon of this might be clearly ſhewn, were there time now for ſuch an enquiry; but it ought to make the moſt knowing and learned of men, doubtful of their judgments in this article, when it is conſidered with what candour, the clear-ſighted and judicious Locke, has acknowledged his errour in that point; and his ignorance of the true ſtate of language, till the preciſion, neceſſary to his ſubject, compelled him to a ſtrict ſcrutiny into its nature: in conſequence of which, he was diveſted of the prejudices, that he had imbibed from cuſtom and education. With what ingenuous modeſty has he confeſſed, that conſciouſneſs of errour, firſt gave riſe to thoſe new and important diſcoveries, laid open in the third book of his Eſſay, in which he treats of words! Where he

ſays, 'I muſt confeſs that when I firſt began 'this diſcourſe of the underſtanding, and a 'good while after, I had not the leaſt thought, 'that any conſideration of words, was at all 'neceſſary to it.' And yet this great man found, that he could not proceed himſelf with any certainty, or manifeſt his thoughts to others with any clearneſs, till he had firſt written an entire book upon that point, which he acknowledges he had before thought, utterly unneceſſary; and till he had ſet himſelf right, as well as the reſt of the world, in the miſtaken notions entertained of language.

What a pity is it, that this penetrating writer, did not carry his enquiries farther into this important ſubject, as he ſeems in one place to promiſe. We might then have had, as accurate a knowledge, of the whole of language, as we now have, of that part of it which he has laid open to us. But he confined himſelf entirely to that branch of language, which related to his ſubject, an enquiry into the human underſtanding; his only object was, to examine the nature of words, as ſymbols of our ideas: Whilſt the nobler branch of language, which conſiſts of the ſigns of internal emotions, was untouched by him as foreign to his purpoſe. And however we may be indebted to him, for the new lights which he has given us into the

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ſubject, ſo far as he has gone; yet it is to be feared, that by ſtopping there, he has not a little contributed, to the confined view which we have of language, in conſidering it, as made up wholly of words.

Our pains with reſpect to language, are at preſent limited, to the narrow conception which we have of it; and therefore are wholly confined to the knowledge and uſe of words: And I think I may venture to appeal to my hearers, whether this is not the generally received opinion? and whether he, who perfectly underſtands the meaning of the words, and has the right uſe of them at command, is not thought to be a maſter of language? Yet, if it can be ſhewn that this is only a part of language; if it can be ſhewn that it has other parts, abſolutely neceſſary to the communication of what paſſes in our minds, which cannot poſſibly be done by mere words; and that too in order to anſwer ſome of the nobleſt, and moſt important ends, of ſuch ſocial communication; it muſt be allowed, that our pains ought not to be confined, to that part only; but ſhould proportionally be extended to thoſe other parts, which are equally neceſſary, and in their conſequences of more importance.

I have already ſhewn, that words are, in their own nature, no eſſential part of language, and

are only conſidered ſo thro' cuſtom. I ſhall now proceed to ſhew, that when by cuſtom they are made a neceſſary part, they are ſtill only a part; that they cannot poſſibly effect all the purpoſes of ſocial communication; and that there are other parts, eſſentially neceſſary to anſwer its nobleſt and beſt ends.

Words are, by compact, the marks or ſymbols of our ideas; and this is the utmoſt extent of their power. Did nothing paſs in the mind of man, but ideas; were he a different kind of being from what he is; were he like the Houynhms of Swift, always directed by a cool, invariable, and as I may ſay inſtinctive reaſon; to make known the ideas of ſuch a mind, and its internal operations, would not be beyond the power of words: and a language compoſed of words only, provided there were a ſufficient number of them, ſo that each idea, and each operation, might have its diſtinct mark, would ſufficiently anſwer the end. For this we find effected amongſt us, in all matters where ſimple reaſon, and mere ſpeculation is concerned, as in the inveſtigations of mathematical truths.

But as there are other things which paſs in the mind of man, beſide ideas; as he is not wholly made up of intellect, but on the contrary, the paſſions, and the fancy, compoſe great part

of his complicated frame; as the operations of theſe are attended with an infinite variety of emotions in the mind, both in kind and degree; it is clear, that unleſs there be ſome means found, of manifeſting thoſe emotions, all that paſſes in the mind of one man cannot be communicated to another. Now, as in order to know what another knows, and in the ſame manner that he knows it, an exact tranſcript of the ideas which paſs in the mind of one man, muſt be made by ſenſible marks, in the mind of another: ſo in order to feel what another feels, the emotions which are in the mind of one man, muſt alſo be communicated to that of another, by ſenſible marks.

That the ſenſible marks neceſſary to anſwer this purpoſe, cannot poſſibly be mere words, might fully be proved by a philoſophical diſquiſition into their nature, were it proper at preſent to enter into ſuch an enquiry: but this point may be made ſufficiently clear to anſwer my preſent deſign, in a ſhorter way. It is certain that we have given names to many of theſe emotions, at leaſt to ſuch as are of the ſtrongeſt, and moſt remarkable kind, tho' much the greater part of them, and the different degrees of all, remain without names. But the uſe of theſe names, is not to ſtand as types of the emotions themſelves, but only as ſigns, of the

ſimple or complex ideas, which are formed of thoſe emotions; that we may be enabled, by the help of thoſe names, to diſtinguiſh them in the underſtanding, and treat of their ſeveral natures, in the ſame cool manner as we do with regard to other ideas, that have no connection with any emotions of the mind.

Every one will at once acknowledge that the terms anger, fear, love, hatred, pity, grief, will not excite in him the ſenſations of thoſe paſſions, and make him angry or afraid, compaſſionate or grieved; nor, ſhould a man declare himſelf to be under the influence of any of thoſe paſſions, in the moſt explicit and ſtrong words that the language can afford, would he in the leaſt affect us, or gain any credit, if he uſed no other ſigns but words. If any one ſhould ſay in the ſame tone of voice that he uſes in delivering indifferent propoſitions from a cool underſtanding, 'Sure never any mortal 'was ſo overwhelmed with grief as I am at this 'preſent.' Or, 'My rage is rouſed to a pitch 'of frenzy, I cannot command it: Avoid me, 'be gone this moment, or I ſhall tear you to 'pieces:' Sure no one would feel any pity for the diſtreſs of the former, or any fear from the threats of the latter. We ſhould either believe that he jeſted, or if he would be thought ſerious, we ſhould be moved to laughter at his abſurdity.

abſurdity. And why is this? But becauſe he makes uſe of words only, as the ſigns of emotions, which it is impoſſible they can repreſent; and omits the uſe of the true ſigns of the paſſions, which are, tones, looks, and geſtures.

This will ſerve to ſhew us that the language, or ſenſible marks, by which the emotions of the mind are diſcovered, and communicated from man to man, are entirely different from words, and independent of them. Nor was this kind of language left to the invention of man, or to the chance of ſuch arbitrary marks, as he ſhould think proper to affix to the paſſions, in order to characterize them: No, it was neceſſary to ſociety, and to the ſtate of human nature in general, that the language of the animal paſſions of man at leaſt, ſhould be fixed, ſelf-evident, and univerſally intelligible; and it has accordingly been impreſſed, by the unerring hand of nature, on the human frame. The improvement and exerciſe of the intellectual faculties to any eminent degree, could fall to the lot of but a ſmall portion of mankind; as even the neceſſaries for the ſupport of life, cannot be acquired by much the greater part, but by ſuch conſtant labour and induſtry as will afford no time for contemplative ſtudies. But tho' it be not neceſſary to ſociety that all men ſhould know much; it is neceſſary that they

ſhould feel much, and have a mutual ſympathy, in whatſoever affects their fellow creatures. All our affections therefore and emotions, belonging to man in his animal ſtate, are ſo diſtinctly characterized, by certain marks, that they cannot be miſtaken; and this language of the paſſions, carries with it the ſtamp of its almighty Artificer; utterly unlike the poor workmanſhip of imperfect man, as it is not only underſtood by all the different nations of the world, without pains or ſtudy; but excites alſo ſimilar emotions, or correſponding effects in all minds alike.

Thus, the tones expreſſive of ſorrow, lamentation, mirth, joy, hatred, anger, love, pity, &c. are the ſame in all nations, and conſequently can excite emotions in us analogous to thoſe paſſions, when accompanying words which we do not underſtand: Nay the very tones themſelves, independent of words, will produce the ſame effects, as has been amply proved by the power of muſical imitations. And tho' theſe tones, are uſually accompanied with words, in order that the underſtanding may at the ſame time perceive the cauſe of theſe emotions, by a communication of the particular ideas which excite them; yet that the whole energy, or power of exciting analogous emotions in others, lies in the tones themſelves,

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may be known from this; that whenever the force of theſe paſſions is extreme, words give place to inarticulate ſounds: ſighs, murmurings, in love; ſobs, groans, and cries in grief; half-choaked ſounds in rage; and ſhrieks in terrour, are then the only language heard. And the experience of mankind may be appealed to, whether theſe have not more power in exciting ſympathy, than any thing that can be done by mere words.

Nor has this language of the paſſions been confined to man only; for in that reſpect, he ſeems to be included in the general law, given to all animals that are not mute, or wholly incapable of uttering any ſound; as they alſo expreſs their paſſions by certain tones, which ſtriking the auditory nerves of thoſe of the ſame ſpecies, always produce correſpondent effects; inaſmuch as their kindred organs, are invariably tuned by the hand of nature, in uniſon to thoſe ſounds.

But it is to be obſerved, that each ſpecies of animals, ſeem to have a language of their own, not at all underſtood, or felt by the reſt. The lowing of the cow affects not the lamb; nor does the calf regard the bleating of the ſheep. The neighing of the ſteed, calls up all the attention of the horſe-kind; they gaze towards the place from whence the ſound comes, and

anſwer it, or run that way, if the ſteed be not in view: whilſt the cows and ſheep raiſe not their heads from the ground, but continue to feed, utterly unmoved. The organs of hearing in each ſpecies, are tuned only to the ſounds of their own; and whilſt the roaring of the lioneſs, makes the foreſt tremble, it is the ſweeteſt muſic to the ears of her young. This ſhews us, that the auditory nerves of animals, are conſtructed in ſuch a way, as to be affected only with ſuch ſounds, as immediately regard the two chief ends of their being; the propagation, and preſervation of their ſpecies: All other ſounds therefore, excepting ſuch as excite ſympathy or antipathy, are indifferent to them. Sympathy, with thoſe of their own kind; antipathy, againſt ſuch as are their natural enemies, or deſtructive of their ſpecies. Thoſe which excite ſympathy, may be ſuppoſed to be all in concord; thoſe which rouſe antipathy, to be diſcords; which by creating an uneaſy ſenſation, immediately diſpoſe them to flight, to avoid the enemy. Thus the cry of dogs, warns the hare of his danger: and the howlings of the wolf, alarm the flock. The different ſpecies of animals, may therefore be conſidered, as ſo many different nations ſpeaking different languages, that have no commerce with each other; each of which conſequently

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underſtands none but their own; excepting only thoſe who are in a ſtate of warfare; by whom the language of the enemy is ſufficiently underſtood, for the purpoſe of ſelf-preſervation.

As the paſſions and emotions of the ſeveral kinds of animals, are very different, according to their different natures, ſo is there an equal diverſity of tones, by which theſe ſeveral paſſions and emotions are expreſſed: From the horrible roarings of the lion, to the gentle bleatings of the lamb: from the loud bellowings of the wild bull, to the low purring of the domeſtic cat. But as there is no paſſion or emotion whatſoever, in the whole animal world, which is not to be found in man, ſo equally comprehenſive is the language of his paſſions, which are all manifeſted by ſuitable tones. The roaring of the lion, is not more terrible than the voice of his anger; nor the cooings of the pigeon, more ſoft, than the murmurs of his love. The crowing of the morning cock, is not ſo clear and ſprightly as the notes of his joy; nor the melancholy mournings of the turtle, ſo plaintive as thoſe of his woe. The organs of hearing therefore in man, are ſo conſtructed, as not to be indifferent to any kind of tone, either in his own ſpecies, or in the animal world, that is expreſſive of emotion or paſſion: from all they receive either pleaſure

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or pain, as they are affected with ſympathy or antipathy. It is true that like the ſeveral tribes of animals, man is moſt affected, or has the ſtrongeſt ſympathy excited, by ſuch tones as are uttered by thoſe of his own ſpecies; and in proportion alſo by thoſe which moſt nearly reſemble them in others. We are moved moſt by the diſtreſsful cries of thoſe animals, that have any ſimilitude to the human voice, ſuch as the fawn, and the hare, when ſeized in purſuit by dogs. But ſtill we both feel and underſtand the nature of all others. Nor can any animal utter any ſound which we cannot explain, or tell from what emotion, or paſſion it proceeds. This diſtinguiſhing faculty was neceſſary to man as maſter of the animal race, that by underſtanding their ſeveral languages, he might relieve their diſtreſſes, and ſupply their wants. And indeed we find, that the tones of all domeſtic animals, expreſſive of their wants or diſtreſſes, have a wonderful power over the human heart, and mechanically rouſe us to their relief.

Thus extenſive as are the powers of the human ear, thoſe of the human voice do not fall ſhort of them; but are exactly ſuited to them in degree and comprehenſion; there is no tone which the ear can diſtinguiſh, that the voice, by pains and practice, is not capable of uttering.

ing. Hence it comes to paſs, that as man underſtands the language of the different tribes of animals, ſo he can make himſelf underſtood by them. The horſe rejoices in the applauding tones of his rider's voice, and trembles when he changes them to thoſe of anger. What blandiſhments do we ſee in the dog when his maſter ſooths him in kind notes; what fear, and even ſhame, when he changes them to thoſe of chiding? By thoſe the waggoner directs his team, and the herdſman his flock. Even animals of the moſt ſavage nature, are not proof againſt the collective powers of the human voice; and ſhouts of multitudes will put wild beaſts to flight, who can hear without emotion the roarings of the thunder.

But that man ſhould be furniſhed with ſuch an extenſive power in theſe points, even in his animal ſtate, will appear reaſonable, when we conſider that his nature, is an abſtract of all animal nature; and that in his tribe are to be found, all the emotions and paſſions, that belong to all the ſeveral tribes: Conſequently all the marks expreſſive of thoſe emotions, or ſuch as are ſimilar to them, ſhould belong to that tribe. If man is capable of being the moſt ſocial, the moſt tender and affectionate to thoſe of his own ſpecies, of any animal; he is at the ſame time, capable of becoming a greater

enemy,

enemy, and of having a ſtronger hatred and deteſtation of them, than is to be found, even amongſt the different tribes of animals, that are born in a natural ſtate of enmity. All the natural language therefore of ſympathy and antipathy, ſhould be given to him in a higher degree, for the ſame reaſon that it is in a more limited ſtate aſſigned to the ſeveral tribes of animals.

Thus far we find, that man, in his animal capacity, is furniſhed, like all other animals, by nature herſelf, with a language which requires neither ſtudy, art, nor imitation; which ſpontaneouſly breaks out in the exacteſt expreſſions, nicely proportioned to the degrees of his inward emotions; and which is not only univerſally underſtood, but felt by thoſe of the ſame ſpecies, as alſo in certain degrees by the reſt of the animal world. That animals ſhould come perfect from the hand of nature, in this reſpect, as well as in every thing elſe, ſeems reaſonable from this conſideration; that they are utterly incapable of improving themſelves, or of making any alteration in their frames by their own care or pains; their ſeveral faculties by an invariable law, growing to perfection, and decaying with their bodies, with as little aſſiſtance from themſelves, as vegetation in herbs or trees is performed in the inſenſitive world. As the firſt of animals, nature has not been leſs provi-

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dent with regard to man; on the contrary this, as well as all his other animal faculties, is beſtowed on him in a degree ſuitable to the ſuperiority of his rank. But as man is ſomething greater than the firſt of animals; as he is the link between animal and ſpiritual beings, and partakes of both their natures; other faculties, and other principles, belonging to his nobler, ſpiritual part, diſcloſe themſelves; of which there are no traces in the animal world.

The firſt great diſtinction between the human and animal ſpecies, and which ſeems to mark their boundaries, is this: That it is in the power of man, by his own pains and induſtry, to forward the perfection of his nature. And what the nobler part of his nature is, is clearly pointed out by that diſtinction; becauſe it is that nobler part only, or ſuch of his animal faculties, as are neceſſary to forward the perfection of that nobler part, which are capable of improvement by ſuch pains. All the organs and faculties of his body neceſſary to his animal life, are ſo faſhioned by the hand of nature, that they grow of courſe to perfection; but the organs (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) and faculties of his mind, neceſſary to his rational life, are only in embryo; and it depends wholly upon the aſſiſtance of others, together with his own

own care, to give them birth, and bring them to maturity.

Hence ariſes the neceſſity of a ſocial ſtate to man both for the unfolding, and exerting of his nobler faculties. For this purpoſe, a power of opening a communication between mind and mind, was furniſhed in the moſt eaſy way, by beſtowing on him the organs of ſpeech. But ſtill we are to obſerve, that nature did no more than furniſh the power and means; ſhe did not give the language, as in the caſe of the paſſions, but left it to the induſtry of men, to find out, and agree upon ſuch articulate ſounds, as they ſhould chuſe to make the ſymbols of their ideas. And ſhe ſeems to have laid down the ſame general law, with reſpect to every thing which regarded the nobler part of man; to furniſh nothing but what was abſolutely neceſſary, and leave the reſt to his own induſtry: From the exertion of which, his merit was to ariſe, and his pretenſions to ſtand a candidate for his admiſſion, into an higher, and happier order of beings. Accordingly as ſhe did not furniſh the words, which were to be the ſymbols of his ideas; neither did ſhe furniſh the tones, which were to manifeſt, and communicate by their own virtue, the internal exertions and emotions, of ſuch of his nobler faculties, as chiefly diſ-

tinguiſh

tinguiſh him from the brute ſpecies; but left them alſo, like words, to the care and invention of man; contenting herſelf with ſupplying him with an inſtrument, of ſuch a compaſs as would furniſh a ſufficient variety of tones, to anſwer all the variety of emotions, exertions, and energies of all his faculties, if ſought for, and ſettled by agreement, to be their marks. Nor has art found thoſe which are of her invention to be of leſs efficacy, or leſs capable of exciting correſpondent emotions, than thoſe even of nature, when eſtabliſhed by cuſtom; in this caſe juſtly called ſecond nature. The only difference between them lying in this, that the tones of the animal paſſions, of themſelves excite analogous emotions, without the intervention of any thing elſe; they are underſtood, by being felt. But the tones reſulting from the emotions and exertions of our nobler faculties, tho' they excite feeling, as it is in the nature of all tones to do ſo, yet it is only of a vague and indeterminate nature; not correſponding to the energies in the mind of the ſpeaker, unleſs they are aſſociated with words, or the ſymbols of the ideas, which give riſe to thoſe energies and emotions; their nature and degree then become fixed, and the hearer both feels and underſtands them. When any tones therefore are affixed to certain modes of expreſſion, and adopted

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into general uſe; thoſe tones, tho' they have no natural connection with the ſentiment, no more than words have with ideas; yet by ſuch aſſociation, become equally intelligible, and equally affecting with thoſe that have, and are made part of the language; inſomuch, that were thoſe expreſſions to be uttered, without thoſe tones, they would not convey their full meaning.

Thus far I have conſidered tones, chiefly in contradiſtinction to words, as the types and language of the paſſions, and all internal emotions, in the ſame way as articulate ſounds, are the types and language of ideas, independent of any ſuch emotions. But when we come to examine the powers of each in their full extent, we ſhall find, that tho' words are limited to their peculiar office, and never can ſupply the place of tones; yet tones, on the other hand, are not confined to their province, but often ſupply the place of words, as marks of ideas. And tho' the eaſe and diſtinctneſs with which our ideas are marked by articulate ſounds, has made all mankind agree to uſe them in diſcourſe, yet that tones are capable in a great meaſure of ſupplying their place, is clear from this; that the Chineſe language is chiefly made up of tones, and the ſame individual word ſhall have ſixty different meanings, according to the different

ferent tones in which it is pronounced. Here then it is clear, that fifty-nine of the ſixty ideas, are marked by tones; for the ſame individual word, pronounced exactly in the ſame manner, cannot poſſibly by itſelf, be a clear and diſtinct mark, for more than one idea. This indeed has prodigiouſly increaſed the difficulty of their language, ſo that it is ſcarcely poſſible for ſtrangers to acquire it; and it is the labour of a man's life, even among the natives, to make himſelf fully maſter of it. Such a uſe of the tones therefore, in equal extent, has not been adopted by any other nation. But there are none which have it not in ſome degree. It is true theſe tones amongſt us, are not annexed to words in their ſeparate ſtate, but only when they are ranged in ſentences; and he muſt be very ignorant of ſpeech who does not know, that the ſame individual words in a ſentence, ſhall have ſeveral very different meanings according to the tones which accompany the emphaſis. To the uſe of theſe tones is owing in a great meaſure conciſeneſs of diſcourſe; and the neceſſity of multiplying words in a language, to a degree that might make them burthenſome to the memory, is removed. Nor are theſe the only advantages ariſing to language from tones; for by thus ſetting off words by tones, and making them determine their

meaning, an agreeable variety may be introduced, into the moſt abſtracted and philoſophical diſcourſes, in which there is no room for the language of the paſſions and emotions; and which conſequently muſt occaſion diſguſt, and ſoon weary attention, if delivered by the uſe of mere words, in one dull uniform tone. On the ſame account it is fortunate alſo that tones have been made the marks of the ſeveral pauſes; and the links which unite together the ſeveral members of ſentences and periods.

But beſide the uſe of tones, in the exertion of his animal, and intellectual faculties; there is another part of man's nature which ſeems to be the link that joins the other two, a great part of whoſe exertions, have their very eſſence, ſo far as they are communicated by the voice, in tones; I mean the fancy.—To one branch of this part of his frame, nature herſelf has furniſhed matter for a language, different in its kind from all other, and peculiar to man; I mean, riſibility; and this matter according to the exertions of fancy, is to be modified into an infinity of ſhapes. There is a laugh of joy, and a laugh of ridicule; there is a laugh of anger, and a laugh of contempt. Nay there are few of our paſſions, to which fancy cannot adapt, and aſſociate this language. And ſhould we trace it thro' all its ſeveral modifications

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and degrees, from the loud burſt of joy, to the tones belonging to the dry ſneer of contempt; we ſhould find, that an extenſive, and expreſſive language, independent of words, belongs to this faculty alone. Let any one who has been preſent at a well-acted comedy, only reflect, how very different the ſentiments, characters, and humour have appeared, in the repreſentation, from what was conveyed to him by the mere peruſal of the words in his cloſet, and he will need no other proof to ſhew him how neceſſary, and how extenſive a part, the tones make, of the language of fancy.

From what has been ſaid, it will ſufficiently appear, how groſsly they are miſtaken, who think that nothing is eſſentially neceſſary to language, but words: And that it is no matter, in what tones their ſentiments are uttered, or whether there be any uſed, ſo that the words are but diſtinctly pronounced, and with ſuch force of voice as to be clearly heard. Since it muſt be allowed, that the uſe of language is not merely to communicate ideas, but alſo all the internal operations, emotions, and exertions, of the intellectual, ſenſitive, and imaginative faculties of man: Since it muſt be allowed, that from the frame of our language, our very ideas cannot be communicated, nor conſequently our meaning underſtood, without the right uſe

of tones; as many of our ideas are marked and diſtinguiſhed from each other by tones, and not words: and ſince it muſt be allowed, that the connection or repugnance of our ideas, their relationſhip or diſagreement, and various dependence on each other in ſentences, are chiefly pointed out by tones belonging to the ſeveral pauſes.

When therefore we reflect, that not only every thing which is pleaſurable, every thing which is forcible and affecting in utterance, but alſo the moſt material points neceſſary to a full and diſtinct comprehenſion, even of the ſenſe of what is uttered, depends upon tones; it may well aſtoniſh us to think, that ſo eſſential a part of language, ſhould in a civilized country be wholly neglected. Nay worſe, that our youth ſhould not only be uninſtructed in the true uſe of theſe, but in the little art that is uſed, they ſhould be early perverted by falſe rules, utterly repugnant to thoſe which nature has clearly pointed out to us. In conſequence of which, all the noble ends which might be anſwered in a free ſtate, by a clear, lively, and affecting public elocution, are in a great meaſure loſt to us. And how can it be otherwiſe, when we have given up the vivifying, energetic language, ſtamped by God himſelf upon our natures, for that which is the cold, lifeleſs work

of

of art, and invention of man? and bartered that which can penetrate the inmoſt receſſes of the heart, for one which dies in the ear, or fades on the ſight.

I ſhould now proceed to lay down ſome practical rules and obſervations, with regard to this material article, but that there is another branch of language ſo nearly connected with this, that all rules in regard to the one, have a neceſſary relation to the other; and therefore it will be both the ſhorteſt, and cleareſt method, to place them together in view. The branch which I mean is that part of language, which is manifeſted to ſight, by the expreſſion of the countenance and geſture: Of which I ſhall treat in my next.

LECTURE VII.

GESTURE.

HITHERTO, language has been conſidered, as addreſſed to the mind, thro' the ear, by means of words, and tones. But nature did not truſt an article, ſo eſſential to the well-being of man, to a communication by one ſenſe only; ſhe has alſo made it viſible to the eye, as well as audible to the ear. So that the deprivation of either ſenſe, ſhould not wholly prevent the exerciſe of man's nobler faculties. As ſhe has annexed tones to the paſſions, to make their exertions known thro' the ear; ſo has ſhe aſſociated to them looks and geſtures, to manifeſt them to the eye. The one, may be juſtly called the ſpeech, the other, the hand-writing of nature. And her hand-writing, like her ſpeech, carries evident marks with it, of its divine original; as it correſponds exactly to its archetype, and is therefore univerſally legible, without pains or ſtudy; and as it contains in itſelf a power, of exciting ſimilar, or analogous emotions.

Not

Not like the writing of man, which having no affinity with its archetype, can be underſtood only by pains and labour; and containing no virtue of its own, can of itſelf, communicate no emotion.

Nor is the written language of Nature leſs expreſſive, or leſs copious, than her ſpeech. They ſeem nicely ſuited to each other, in degree and power; in their effects exactly ſimilar, having no other difference, but what ariſes from the difference of the organs, thro' which they are conveyed. As every paſſion has its peculiar tone, ſo has it, its peculiar look or geſture. And in each, the ſeveral degrees are marked, with the niceſt exactneſs. Both indeed proceeding from the touching of one maſter-ſtring, internal feeling, muſt always anſwer to each other, if I may ſo ſpeak, in perfect uniſon. Thus far they are equal in point of expreſſion; and with reſpect to copiouſneſs as it has been before obſerved, that the human voice is furniſhed with an infinite variety of tones, ſuitable to the infinite variety of emotions in the mind; ſo are the human countenance and limbs, capable of an infinite variety of changes, ſuitable to the tones; or rather to the emotions, whence they both take their riſe. To this purpoſe every nobler organ in man's complicated frame, and the whole animal œconomy contribute.

The muſcles, nerves, the blood and animal ſpirits, all are at work to ſhew internal commotion. The contraction or remiſſion of the ſolids, ſhewn by courageous exertion of action, or puſillanimous trembling; the ruſhing or withdrawing of the fluids, ſeen in bluſhing or paleneſs; are ſtrong and ſelf-evident characters. But of all the organs, the eye, rightly called the window to the breaſt, contains the greateſt variety, as well as diſtinction and force of characters. In rage it is inflamed, in fear it ſickens; it ſparkles in joy, in diſtreſs it is clouded. Nature has indeed annexed to the paſſion of grief, a more forcible character than any other, that of tears; of all parts of language, the moſt expreſſive. And juſtly was this extraordinary ſign of that paſſion, annexed to the nature of man; the child of ſorrow, and inhabitant of the vale of woe: not only to eaſe the burthened heart, but more powerfully to excite his fellow creatures to pity, and to relieve his diſtreſs. Thus at once affording balm to the afflicted, and inciting mankind to the exerciſe of their nobleſt quality, benevolence. On which account, this ſingle character, ſums up in it the whole power of language; and in certain circumſtances, has more force alone, than all the united endeavours, of words, tones, and geſtures, can come up to. Such were the

precious

precious drops that fell from Milton's Eve, which Adam kiſſed away; as

——— gracious ſigns of ſweet remorſe,
And pious awe, that fear'd to have offended.

Such were the tears of Sigiſmunda, in Dryden's beautiful deſcription, ſhed over Guiſcardo's heart.

She ſaid—Her brim-full eyes that ready ſtood,
And only wanted will, to weep a flood,
Releas'd their wat'ry ſtore, and pour'd amain,
Like clouds low-hung, a ſober ſhow'r of rain;
Mute, ſolemn ſorrow, free from female noiſe,
Such, as the majeſty of grief deſtroys;
For bending o'er the cup, the tears ſhe ſhed,
Seem'd, by the poſture, to diſcharge her head
O'erfill'd before; and oft her mouth applied
To the cold heart, ſhe kiſs'd at once, and cry'd.

Nor is the virtue of this expreſſion confined to our own ſpecies only, but it is of all others that which moſt moves us, in ſuch animals as are capable of it. On which account, the ſtrong painter of nature, Shakeſpear, in his deſcription of the wounded ſtag, ſtanding over the ſtream, took care not to omit it; where he ſays

——— the big round drops
Courſed one another down his innocent noſe,
In piteous chaſe.

Which is by much the moſt affecting part of the picture.

But

But tho' in this written language of nature, ſhe has given ſuch forcible, and diſtinct characters, to all the animal paſſions of man, and proportionally to ſuch as have a near affinity to them, or are blended with them; yet ſhe has laid down the ſame law, with regard to the viſible ſigns, of the exertions and emotions of all his nobler faculties, as ſhe has done with regard to the tones. In both ſhe has furniſhed the means with equal liberality; but has left it to the invention and care of man, to make a right uſe of them, and apply them in ſuitable degrees. By the exertion of ſuch ſkill and pains, it would be found that the viſible language alone, which can be ſhewn in the features and limbs of man, is of itſelf ſufficient, without other aid, to every purpoſe of ſocial communication. To inſtance only in two articles, the eyes, and hands: What inward emotion is there, which cannot be manifeſted by theſe? Do not the eyes diſcover humility, pride; cruelty, compaſſion; reflection, diſſipation; kindneſs, reſentment? Is there an emotion of fancy, is there a ſhade of ridicule, which they cannot repreſent? Let any one who has ſeen Mr. Garrick perform, conſider how much he was indebted to the language of his eyes, and there will be no occaſion to ſay more, to give him an idea of the extent

extent and power of expreſſion, to which that language may be brought.

With reſpect to the power of the hands, every one knows that with them, we can demand, or promiſe; call, diſmiſs; threaten, ſupplicate; aſk, deny; ſhew joy, ſorrow, deteſtation, fear, confeſſion, penitence, admiration, reſpect; and many other things now in common uſe. But how much farther their powers might be carried, thro' our neglect of uſing them, we little know. And indeed the extenſiveneſs of this viſible language, would ſcarce gain credit with us, notwithſtanding all the accounts of it handed down from antiquity, particularly with reſpect to the mimes, had we not inſtances of natural mimes, now living, who have been compelled to the ſtudy and practice of this language, thro' the misfortune of having been born without the ſenſe of hearing.

Having ſufficiently ſhewn the force and extent of this language of nature, and the abſolute neceſſity of it to man, in order to the exertion, exerciſe, and manifeſtation of all his nobler faculties, it may juſtly excite wonder to reflect, that it has been in general ſo little cultivated; and that hiſtory furniſhes us with an account, but of two nations, out of the great variety that have inhabited this peopled globe ſince the creation, that ever applied themſelves

to

to the regular ſtudy and practice of it, ſo as to bring it to perfection. And theſe were the Greeks and Romans; who raiſed themſelves to ſuch an height above the reſt of mankind, that when we examine their hiſtory, ſurvey their mighty works, and compare them with thoſe of other nations, their proportion to the reſt of the world, ſeems to be that of the Brobdignags to the Lilliputians.

It is true that in ſome other countries, this language of ſigns, has in ſome degree prevailed; but the difference between the Ancients and Moderns lies in this; that the Ancients, founded all their inſtituted ſigns, on Nature; from her they drew all their ſtores; fitted them in the niceſt and exacteſt manner to the emotions which they were to expreſs; and adapted them ſo to their artificial language, that their whole delivery form'd the compleateſt harmony: the words, tones, looks, and geſtures, correſponding to each other, in ſuch a way, as that each contributed to enforce, and adorn the other; and their united efforts, produced the ſentiments of the mind, in their full proportion and beauty. So that all mankind who ſaw, and heard them, were charmed with the manner of their delivery, tho' they underſtood not their ſpeech; and partook of their emotions, even without any communication of their ideas. But

amongſt

amongſt the Moderns, the inſtituted ſigns of tones, geſture, &c. were not founded on nature, but caprice and fancy; and obtained their whole force, from faſhion and cuſtom. Conſequently, they had neither meaning, nor beauty, to any but the natives of each country, and were totally different from each other in the ſeveral countries; which is ſufficiently known by all, who are converſant with the natives of France, Spain, and Italy. But of all nations in the world, the Engliſh ſeem to have the leaſt uſe of this language of ſigns; there being few inſtituted ſigns of emotions, either of tones, looks, or geſtures, that are adopted into general uſe. On the contrary, each individual, either follows his own fancy in this reſpect, and has what is called a way of his own; or elſe adopts the manner of ſome other, who pleaſes his fancy, and of whom he is altogether a mimick.

From what has been ſaid, it is apparent that no general practical rules, I mean ſuch as would be of any efficacy, can be laid down in this reſpect. For general practical rules muſt be founded on general practice; and as there is no ſuch ſtandard, in theſe countries, to refer to, it would be in vain to lay down ſuch rules, as cannot be explained and enforced by examples. In ſome points, that demand practice, as well

as ſpeculation, the practical part muſt be obtained by the imitation of patterns, and continual exerciſe in that way, till the imitation becomes perfect, and paſſes into a habit. But where there are no general models to be copied from, there can be no general practice, founded on imitation. In Greece and Rome, all the public ſpeakers, agreeing as much in the uſe of the ſame ſigns, or language of nature, as they did in the uſe of the ſame words, or language of art; afforded general, conſtant, and ſure patterns of imitation to others. In France, Italy, and Spain, as in each country, there is an uniform, ſteady uſe of the ſame ſigns, tho' in a more confined way, yet ſo far they alſo afford ſure patterns of imitation. But in England, where there are ſcarce any traces of a general agreement in the uſe of ſuch ſigns, there can be no obſervations drawn from general practice, no rules laid down that require explanation by examples, nor no manner recommended, which demands the aid of patterns. In this caſe, all that can be done is, to lay down ſuch rules to individuals, as ſhall enable them to avoid faults, not acquire beauties. It is in the power of rules to compaſs the former, the latter cannot be obtained without models and practice. I ſay cannot be obtained; for to ſome, nature has been uncommonly

monly bountiful; and in thoſe who have had the good fortune to eſcape ill habits, a native grace will appear, beyond what could be acquired by art alone; but of this the inſtances are rare. If inſtances of ſuch extraordinary gifts are few, much fewer are the examples of ſuch, as have not been corrupted by cuſtom. And indeed when theſe gifts are beſtowed in the moſt eminent degree, they are capable of great improvement by art; ſo that induſtry is equally uſeful, if not equally neceſſary to all.

It has been already obſerved, that as there is no common ſtandard to be referred to, no general models for imitation, in the uſe of tones and geſture; each individual, either forms a manner peculiar to himſelf, or adopts that of ſome other, that ſtrikes his fancy. Of theſe two ways, there can be no doubt, which a man ſhould follow. He that forms to himſelf a manner of his own, will probably acquire ſuch a one, as will be moſt conſonant to his own powers and his own feelings. The very eaſe with which he falls into this, and the difficulty, as well as abſurdity, of putting any conſtraint upon his nature, and forcing his organs, where he has no object of imitation in view, will of courſe accompliſh this point. But he who endeavours to adopt the manner of another, loſes ſight of his own nature, and puts a conſtraint

upon his organs. For men do not differ more from each other in their faces, than they do in their powers of delivery. And the ſame manner which is eaſy and agreeable in one man, becomes conſtrained and diſguſting, when aſſumed by another. The reaſon is, that all conſtraint upon nature is inſtantly perceived, as it produces affectation, and of courſe deſtroys true feeling; for it is as impoſſible, where affectation takes place in the manner of delivery, or in the ſigns of inward emotions, that the feelings of the heart ſhould be excited, as that two muſical ſtrings, not in uniſon, ſhould vibrate to each other, when one only is ſtruck. Fantaſtical emotions will produce fantaſtical ſigns, and fantaſtical ſigns, by reaction, will produce fantaſtical emotions. Both, having their riſe in the imagination, may operate upon the fancy, and produce effects there, but never can reach the heart; as all communication between them, is neceſſarily cut off by affectation. Thus the fancied operations of the ſpirit, in the people called Quakers, manifeſted by the moſt unnatural ſigns; and in ſome other religious ſects, by a certain cant, and extravagant geſtures, produce powerful effects, on the imaginations of ſuch hearers, as are bred up in the perſuaſion, that ſuch ſigns are the language of the ſpirit: But it muſt be evident, upon obſerving

ſerving both the preachers and their auditory, that it is only the imagination, which is ſo wrought upon; as there is no diſcovering in their countenances, any ſigns which are the natural concomitants of the feelings of the heart. This ſort of language of emotions therefore, is well calculated to make enthuſiaſts, but not believers.

In ſuch a ſituation of things, the rule by which all public ſpeakers are to guide themſelves is obvious and eaſy. Let each, in the firſt place, avoid all imitation of others; let him give up all pretenſions to art, for it is certain that it is better to have none, than not enough; and no man has enough, who has not arrived at ſuch a perfection of art, as wholly to conceal his art; a thing not to be compaſſed but by the united endeavours, of the beſt inſtruction, perfect patterns, and conſtant practice. Let him forget that he ever learned to read; at leaſt, let him wholly forget his reading tones. Let him ſpeak entirely from his feelings; and they will find much truer ſigns to manifeſt themſelves by, than he could find for them. Let him always have in view, what the chief end of ſpeaking is; and he will ſee the neceſſity of the means propoſed to anſwer the end. The chief end of all public ſpeakers is to perſuade; and in order to perſuade, it is

above all things neceſſary, that the ſpeaker, ſhould at leaſt appear himſelf to believe, what he utters; but this can never be the caſe, where there are any evident marks of affectation or art. On the contrary, when a man delivers himſelf in his uſual manner, and with the ſame tones and geſture, that he is accuſtomed to uſe, when he ſpeaks from his heart; however awkward that manner may be, however ill-regulated the tones, he will ſtill have the advantage of being thought ſincere; which of all others, is the moſt neceſſary article, towards ſecuring attention and belief; as affectation of any kind, is the ſureſt way to deſtroy both.

In elocution, the two great articles are, force, and grace; the one has its foundation chiefly in nature, the other in art. When united, they mutually ſupport each other; when ſeparated, their powers are very different. Nature can do much without art; art but little without nature. Nature, aſſaults the heart; art, plays upon the fancy. Force of ſpeaking, will produce emotion and conviction; grace, only excites pleaſure and admiration. As the one is the primary, and the other but a ſecondary end of ſpeech, it is evident, that where one or the other, is wholly to take place, the former ſhould have the preference. Grace in elocution, it is hardly poſſible to obtain, in the preſent ſtate

of

of things: Force of delivery, is the neceſſary reſult of a clear head, and warm heart; provided no bad habits interfere, and the ſpeaker ſuffers his manner to be regulated wholly by his feelings and conceptions.

Perhaps it may be thought, that in reducing all which might be offered on this head, to one ſimple rule, there has been little done, and that no great improvement is likely to enſue: or at beſt, that by recommending it to each, to follow his own manner, whatever it be, he will be left in the poſſeſſion of all the faults and defects, belonging to that manner. It will be urged, that a ſyſtem of rules pointing out what particular tones and geſtures, are in their own nature, beſt adapted to expreſs the ſeveral emotions of the mind, would be the true means, to ſhew how people may arrive at propriety and grace, in thoſe ornamental parts of delivery. But they who judge in this manner, have not ſufficiently conſidered the nature of the ſubject; and therefore attribute more power to precept alone, than it is poſſeſſed of. Practical rules, differ much from thoſe which are merely ſpeculative; nor will informing the underſtanding in ſome caſes, by any means produce right execution, without other aſſiſtance. Can any one be taught to ſing, or to dance, without the aid of maſters, and patterns for imitation? Why

ſhould we ſuppoſe then, that the uſe of regular tones and geſture, which are of the ſame nature, and founded upon the ſame principles, can be acquired any other way? Should we not laugh at the abſurdity, of any ſinging or dancing-maſter, that ſhould propoſe to inſtruct his pupils only by laying down, each, the rules of his art; and ſhewing the practical part by ſinging, or dancing himſelf, without making his pupils alſo practiſe, and correcting every deviation from rule, and every fault in their execution, till it become exact? Should we not ſuppoſe, in ſuch a caſe, that the pupils, at beſt, muſt become but very aukward, and inaccurate mimics of their manner? The ſame fate muſt alſo attend any attempt, to teach the uſe of regular tones and geſture, without purſuing the ſame method as is uſed by the maſters in their kindred arts. Nothing would be more eaſy than to produce a more comprehenſive ſyſtem of rules, on that head, than any extant; but this would be a work of more oſtentation than uſe. Were there maſters to teach this, in the ſame manner as other arts are taught, ſuch a ſyſtem of rules, would not only be uſeful but neceſſary. And indeed, without ſuch a ſyſtem of rules, to qualify perſons for the office of inſtructing pupils methodically in the art, we can never hope to ſee proper maſters ariſe among

us. Till that comes to paſs, the beſt ſervice I can do, is to inform individuals how they may by their own endeavours arrive at ſuch a degree of excellence, as they can attain without the aid of maſters; and I am much deceived if the obſervation of this rule will not be found the only means of accompliſhing the point.

To thoſe who imagine, that this would make but little improvement, in the article of delivery, I muſt beg leave to obſerve, that they have not ſufficiently conſidered, the chief cauſe of its low ſtate amongſt us. Which is, that an artificial manner, either from early inſtitution, or ſubſequent imitation, has in general ſupplanted that which is natural in moſt public ſpeakers, and readers; or in ſome degree affected the beſt. And this artificial manner, not being founded on true principles, and always differing from that which is natural, of courſe carries with it evident marks of art and affectation. So that the reſtoring a natural manner of delivery, would be bringing about an entire revolution, in its moſt eſſential parts. And if I can ſhew, that after a perſon has made himſelf maſter of the fundamental points, which have been conſidered at large in the former lectures, nothing elſe would be wanting, to anſwer the great purpoſes of delivery, and

to obtain him the character of an excellent ſpeaker, in proportion to his natural talents; if I can ſhew too, that it is in the power of every one to compaſs this point, if he ſeriouſly applies to it; I cannot but think, that every end, which could reaſonably be expected from a courſe of this nature, will be fully anſwered.

I know the objection ready to be ſtarted againſt this method is, what has been already mentioned, that if every one follows his own manner, the faults belonging to that manner, muſt of courſe accompany his delivery. 'Tis granted; and it were to be wiſhed, that a way were opened, by which ſpeakers might be cured of all faults, in all the parts of delivery; but as this is impoſſible, without the aid of maſters, and ſince thro' want of maſters, faults there muſt be; the queſtion is, whether a perſon ſhould take up with his own, or thoſe of another? A man's own faults, ſit eaſy on him; habit has given them the air of being natural; thoſe of another, are not aſſumed without aukwardneſs, they are evidently artificial. Where truth is concerned, the very faults of a ſpeaker which ſeem natural, are more agreeable to the hearer, than ſuch beauties as are apparently borrowed; in the ſame manner as the moſt indifferent natural complexion, is preferred by thoſe whoſe

taſte

taſte is not corrupted, to the fineſt painted ſkin. It is often ſeen, that the motions and addreſs of a man, aukwardly formed, appear more graceful, on account of their eaſe, than thoſe of the beſt-ſhaped, who ape the manner of others; and who ſhew an evident attention to their deportment; for that, muſt always be the caſe of copyiſts.

But beſides, in the preſent ſtate of elocution, no one need be apprehenſive of ſuffering, by faults of this kind; for they will either not be perceived by the general eye, or be overlooked by the moſt critical. It has been already obſerved, that he who is maſter even of the rudiments, paſſes amongſt us for a good ſpeaker; and if to theſe, force be ſuperadded in his manner, we have every thing that we require in a good delivery. Grace and harmony, as they are ſcarce known amongſt us, ſo are they in general out of the queſtion. Nothing can ſhock us, in the manner of delivery, but ſome manifeſt abſurdity, or impropriety. He who ſpeaks from his heart, can never fall into any abſurdity in his manner; this is what they only are liable to, who adopt the manner of another, or are governed by imperfect, or ill-founded rules of art. And with reſpect to impropriety, as that conſiſts in offending againſt ſome general known rule, where no ſuch rules

exiſt, there can be no perceptible impropriety. Singularity of manner, is far from giving us any idea of impropriety, becauſe it is ſo cuſtomary, as to ſeem conformable to the very genius of the nation. Nor is ſingularity of manner, in the preſent ſtate of elocution, prejudicial to the main object of delivery; the reaſon of this will be immediately perceived, when we conſider the difference, between impropriety in the uſe of words, as ſigns of our ideas, and that of tones and geſture, as ſigns of our emotions. Words being made by compact ſigns of our ideas, have a general meaning annexed to them, in which all are agreed: and he who is ſingular in his uſe of them, and annexes any other ſignification to them, than what is eſtabliſhed by ſuch general agreement, renders himſelf unintelligible, and is guilty of a manifeſt impropriety. But the uſe of tones and geſture, as marks of our emotions, not having been eſtabliſhed amongſt us, by any ſuch general compact; at leaſt there being but very few that have any ſettled ſignificance; each individual, has a proportional latitude, to adopt ſuch as he thinks proper, for his own uſe. Amongſt the Greeks and Romans indeed, by whom the language of emotions, was as well regulated, and univerſally underſtood, as the language of ideas; any change, in the uſe of

eſtabliſhed

eſtabliſhed tones and geſture, was looked upon to be as great an impropriety, as the uſe of words in a different ſenſe from what cuſtom had annexed to them. And the ſame holds good alſo in France, Spain, and Italy, ſo far as ſuch ſigns are adopted into general uſe. But for the reaſons before aſſigned, it is not ſo with us. Each man, has in a great meaſure, a language of his own, by which he expreſſes his emotions. If it be ſaid, that ſuch a diverſity in the uſe of this language, muſt be attended with as bad conſequences, as the confuſion of the tongues at Babel, and render it impoſſible for men to underſtand the meaning of each other's ſigns; in anſwer to this, it is to be obſerved, that there is an eſſential difference between the two languages, as to their intelligibility, or mode of underſtanding them. The language of ideas, cannot poſſibly be unſtood, without an agreement in the uſe of the ſame ſigns or words; but the language of emotions, when aſſociated to words, requires no ſuch agreement in the uſe of the ſame ſigns, to point out their ſignificancy. For, as words ſhew the ideas which paſs in the mind of the ſpeaker, and which are the cauſes of his emotions, the nature of the ſigns by which the ſpeaker manifeſts thoſe emotions, is at the ſame time fully diſplayed. On the other hand, it is

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not in the power of the language of emotions, to give us the leaſt inſight into the language of ideas; for if a perſon, ſpeaking an unknown tongue, ſhould accompany his words, with the moſt animated geſture, expreſſive looks, and ſignificant tones; tho' we may perfectly underſtand the nature of his emotions, and partake of his feelings, yet it is impoſſible, without an interpreter, to know the cauſe of them, or the particular ideas in the mind of the ſpeaker, that gave them birth. But ſhould three natives of France, Spain, and Italy, relate the ſame thing ſucceſſively to one, who underſtood their ſeveral tongues, with tones, looks, and geſtures, entirely different from each other, he would not only underſtand the meaning of their words, but of their concomitant ſigns alſo. In this caſe the language of ideas, illuſtrates all the different languages of emotion, in the ſame manner as the ſun illuminates the ſeveral planets; which dark in themſelves, ſhine only by reflected light.

This being the caſe, perſons who are advanced in life, need not have any ſolicitude, about the delicacies and graces of delivery; force and expreſſion, will anſwer all their ends; and theſe, it is in their own power to give, to their external marks, in proportion to what paſſes within their minds, only by indulging their feelings,

feelings, and avoiding all affectation and art. Of this we have as many inſtances in private life, as we meet with perſons who ſpeak from their hearts, upon any topic, or incident which nearly concerns them. And if we ſeldom meet with it in public diſcourſes, it is either, becauſe the ſpeakers, have not their hearts affected by the ſubjects, upon which they harangue; or becauſe, an artificial manner, for the reaſons before mentioned, has ſupplanted that of the natural kind. This it was which Betterton meant by his reply to the Biſhop of London; who aſking him on a certain occaſion, 'What could be the reaſon, that whole audi-'ences ſhould be moved to tears, and have all 'ſorts of paſſions excited, at the repreſentation 'of ſome ſtory on the ſtage, which they knew 'to be feigned, and in the event of which, they 'were not at all concerned; yet that the ſame 'perſons, ſhould ſit ſo utterly unmoved, at diſ-'courſes from the pulpit, upon ſubjects of the 'utmoſt importance to them, relative not only 'to their temporal, but alſo their eternal inte-'reſts? He received from Betterton this memorable reply; 'My Lord, it is becauſe we are in earneſt.' And indeed whoever is in earneſt when he ſpeaks in public, provided he be free from any defects, in the fundamental parts of delivery, will anſwer every end of elocution in

theſe times, and paſs for an excellent ſpeaker; and I am much deceived, if it is not to this point chiefly, that thoſe who are reckoned the beſt ſpeakers at this day, are indebted for their reputation. Sure I am, that the advantages which the Methodiſt teachers, have obtained over the regular clergy, in ſeducing ſo many of their flocks from them, have been wholly owing to this. For were they to read their nonſenſe from notes, in the ſame cold, artificial manner, that ſo many of the clergy deliver rational diſcourſes, it is to be preſumed, that there are few of mankind ſuch idiots, as to become their followers; or who would not prefer ſenſe to nonſenſe, if they were cloathed in the ſame garb.

Excepting theſe wild orators, we have few inſtances, of any public ſpeakers, who even ſeem to be in earneſt; and on that account, thoſe few who are really ſo, raiſe to themſelves a proportionate degree of admiration. Upon a late public occaſion at Oxford, there was a remarkable proof given of this. A perſon of the firſt ſtation * in the Univerſity, was to addreſs, by virtue of his office, the new-elected Chancellour, in the public theatre, and in the preſence of many thouſands. He was no way remarkable for elocution, and this was perhaps

* The Vice Chancellour.

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the firſt time, he found himſelf engaged, in a ſcene of this kind. As he was a man of a ſpeculative turn, he had an uncommon ſhare, even in private company, of that aukward baſhfulneſs, which is uſually the attendant of thoſe, who have much commerce with books, and little with the world. Thoſe of his acquaintance therefore, were in pain for him; and they who knew him only by character, did not expect that he would acquit himſelf well. But all were pleaſingly diſappointed. As he had no art, he did not attempt to uſe any. He was really, and at heart pleaſed, with the election of the Chancellour, and expreſſed himſelf accordingly. He received him, with the air of the ſame cordial joy, that a man would ſhew, on the arrival of a long wiſhed for, noble gueſt, under his roof, whoſe preſence would make a ſort of little jubilee in the family. His tones were ſuch, as reſult from a glad heart; his eyes ſparkled with pleaſure, and his whole countenance and geſture were in exact uniſon. No one was at leiſure to examine whether any part of his elocution might have been more graceful; it was juſt, it was forcible, it moved every one. His eaſy, natural, and unaffected manner, which perhaps was ſcarcely ever ſeen before by any of his auditors, in a public ſpeaker, excited burſts of univerſal applauſe;

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not from proſtituted hands, in ſupport of party opinions; but from hearts, that felt themſelves agitated, by a participation of kindred feelings, reſulting from his manner, independent of his matter.

But that the natural manner of delivery, ſhould have ſuch force, and paſs for the moſt excellent kind amongſt us, who have never made any attempt to ſtudy elocution as an art; is no matter of ſurpriſe, when we conſider, that even amongſt the Romans, after the art had been introduced, and numbers applied themſelves cloſely to the ſtudy and practice of it, there was ſtill great attention given, and high honour paid to ſuch ſpeakers, as relied entirely on nature, and had their delivery wholly governed by their emotions. Cicero in his book *de Oratore*, mentions an inſtance of this kind in Q. Varius, whom he repreſents, as utterly rude and ungraceful in his manner, to the laſt degree; yet as one who had obtained a great weight at Rome, by his power of ſpeaking, ſuch as it was.

This point being allowed, it is evidently in the power of every one, to deliver himſelf with ſuch force, and acquire ſuch a reputation for ſpeaking, as he is entitled to by his natural talents. There are few public ſpeakers who have not two kinds of delivery; one for public, the other for private uſe. The one, artificial

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and conſtrained; the other, natural and eaſy. There is therefore nothing more required, than to change one manner for another; to unlearn the former, and ſubſtitute the latter in its room; of which, each individual is already maſter. Had he indeed a new manner to acquire, as well as to get rid of the old, the difficulty would be great; but when he has only to unlearn a bad habit, and has another ready to ſubſtitute in its room, it requires nothing but attention, and regular information of his errours, when he falls into them.

Beſide the ſources of artificial delivery before mentioned, there is another, with which moſt public ſpeakers are unknowingly infected. I mean certain peculiarities which prevail, in each of the three different ſpecies of delivery, in the pulpit, the ſenate-houſe, and the bar, both in phraſeology and manner; and theſe, cannot be too ſtudiouſly avoided. They have each their particular idioms, and abound with expletives and repletives, accompanied with motions, equally unimportant, and inſignificant. Theſe probably, owed their origin, to imitation of the faults (for faults are eaſily imitated) of ſome of the admired ſpeakers, in the ſeveral branches. They have been adopted into ſuch general uſe by each ſociety; that it is hard for any member of thoſe bodies, to avoid catching them,

them, unleſs he be upon his guard againſt them. But as it is eaſy to know thoſe ſingularities, ſo the being guarded againſt them, will prevent new members from falling into them; and attention and reſolution, will ſoon get the better of them, in thoſe, who are always infected. It may be ſaid, that cuſtom has ſo far ſanctified theſe ſingularities, that the avoiding them is not an object of any moment; and that it is at leaſt a matter of indifference, whether they are uſed or not. It is true indeed, that general uſe has rendered them ſo familiar, that their deformity is not perceived; and the practice of them is attended with no blame. But on the other hand, he who avoids them is ſure to be commended for it, and makes himſelf diſtinguiſhed on that very account. He that is contented, if he eſcapes without cenſure, may freely indulge himſelf in the uſe of them; but he that would obtain praiſe, will not ſurely loſe ſo cheap an opportunity of purchaſing it, as that of avoiding general and apparent faults, which will coſt him no more pains than a reſolution to do ſo.

But a caſe may be put, that ſuppoſing a man has, by indulging early bad habits, or from any other cauſe, acquired a manner of delivery in private life, and in his uſual diſcourſe, very diſagreeable and diſguſting; ſuppoſing he

ſhould

ſhould have a habit of diſtorting his features, of uſing aukward and extravagant geſtures, and uttering ſtrange and diſcordant tones; is he not in ſuch a caſe, to endeavour to get the better of theſe, whenever he ſpeaks in public, and conſequently to avoid that manner, which from habit, may be called his natural one? My anſwer is, that if he thinks of reforming this only in public, he begins at the wrong end, and will never be able to effect what he deſires. His buſineſs is, to ſet about a reformation of all ſuch faults, firſt, in private life; if by his own attention to it, and the conſtant information of his friends, he ſhould get the better of them there, of courſe he will be without them alſo in public. But if he ſhould continue regardleſs of his private manner, and be only ſtudious of correcting what is amiſs in public, he will find habit too powerful for him; and the very attention which he pays to that point, will prevent his entering with earneſtneſs into his ſubject, and give a conſtrained air to all that he delivers. So that tho' a man cannot give too much attention in private, to the correction of faulty habits, yet he ſhould utterly forget that he has any ſuch when he ſpeaks in public; for by ſuch recollection and attention, he will loſe force, without acquiring grace; which is incompatible with any apparent ſolicitude

about it. Nor need a perſon even tho' he ſhould not be able wholly to ſubdue habits of that ſort, be in any pain about it; as the frequency of faults, and ſingularities in that way, pleads their excuſe. *Defendit numerus. Veniam petimuſque damuſque viciſſim.* He is kept in countenance by numbers, who partaking of ſimilar faults, mutually give and receive indulgence from each other. Singularity of manner in any ſpeaker only ſtrikes at firſt. After a few times, it is no longer taken notice of by the hearers; and if a ſtranger obſerves upon it to ſuch as are his uſual auditors, the common anſwer is, 'Oh, that's *his way;*' and this puts an end to all farther remarks. Faults which from conſtant habit appear natural to a man, have an eaſe with them which takes away their diſagreeableneſs, when one is a little uſed to them; but faults from affectation, or imitating the manner of others, are for ever diſguſting, becauſe they are apparently artificial. To contract bad habits of one's own is rather the fault of the times, than the man. He is unconſcious of them; he continues in them, thro' want of inſtruction, and information: Few, or none are without them; they meet readily therefore with indulgence. But to imitate and adopt the faulty manner of others, is a voluntary act, it is done with the eyes open; and as it betrays an

errour

errour in judgment, will not admit of the ſame excuſe, nor be allowed the ſame indulgence, by people, of any diſcernment.

Upon the whole, there are two kinds of language, neceſſary to all who would wiſh to anſwer the end of public ſpeaking. The one is, the language of ideas; by which the thoughts which paſs in a man's mind, are manifeſted to others; and this language is compoſed chiefly of words properly ranged, and divided into ſentences. The other, is the language of emotions; by which the effects that thoſe thoughts have upon the mind of the ſpeaker, in exciting the paſſions, affections, and all manner of feelings, are not only made known, but communicated to others; and this language is compoſed of tones, looks, and geſture. The office of a public ſpeaker is, to inſtruct, to pleaſe, and to move. If he does not inſtruct, his diſcourſe is impertinent; and if he does not pleaſe, he will not have it in his power to inſtruct, for he will not gain attention; and if he does not move, he will not pleaſe, for where there is no emotion, there can be no pleaſure. To move therefore, ſhould be the firſt great object of every public ſpeaker; and for this purpoſe, he muſt uſe the language of emotions, not that of ideas alone, which of itſelf has no power of moving. It is evident, in the uſe of the language of emotions, that he who

is properly moved, and at the ſame time delivers himſelf, in ſuch tones, as delight the ear with their harmony; accompanied by ſuch looks and geſtures, as pleaſe the eye with their grace; whilſt the underſtanding alſo perceives their propriety; is in the firſt claſs, and muſt be accounted a maſter. In this caſe, the united endeavours of art and nature, produce that degree of perfection, which is no other way to be obtained, in any thing that is the workmanſhip of man. Next to him, is the ſpeaker, who gives way to his emotions without thinking of regulating their ſigns; and truſts to the force of nature, unſolicitous about the graces of art. And the worſt is he, who uſes tones and geſtures, which he has borrowed from others, and which, not being the reſult of his feelings, are likely to be miſapplied, and to be void of propriety, force, and grace But he who is utterly without all language of emotions, who confines himſelf to the mere utterance of words, without any concomitant ſigns, is not to be claſſed at all amongſt public ſpeakers. The very worſt abuſe of ſuch ſigns, is preferable to a total want of them: as it has at leaſt a ſtronger reſemblance to nature. There is no emotion of the mind, which nature does not make an effort to manifeſt, by ſome of thoſe ſigns; and therefore a total ſuppreſſion of thoſe ſigns, is of all

all other ſtates, apparently the moſt unnatural. And this, it is to be feared is too much the ſtate of the pulpit elocution in general, in the Church of England. On which account, there never was perhaps a religious ſect upon earth, whoſe hearts were ſo little engaged in the act of public worſhip as the members of that Church. To be pleaſed, we muſt feel; and we are pleaſed with feeling. The Preſbyterians are moved; the Methodiſts are moved; they go to their meetings, and tabernacles, with delight. The very Quakers are moved. Fantaſtical, and extravagant as the language of their emotions is, yet ſtill they are moved by it, and they love their form of worſhip for that reaſon. Whilſt much the greater part of the members of the Engliſh Church, are either baniſhed from it thro' diſguſt, or reluctantly attend the ſervice as a diſagreeable duty.

END OF THE LECTURES.

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM

TWO
DISSERTATIONS
ON THE
STATE OF LANGUAGE
IN
DIFFERENT NATIONS.

DISSERTATION I.*

On the State *of* Language *in* Old Greece, *and the Means by which it was brought to Perfection.*

IN my laſt lecture, I concluded all that I thought moſt neceſſary to be ſaid, upon the ſeveral heads mentioned in my propoſals. My chief object in this courſe, has been to point out the principal errours, and defects, in the ſeveral branches of elocution; and at the ſame time to propoſe the moſt effectual means of correcting thoſe errours, and ſupplying thoſe defects, in its preſent deplorable ſtate; as we have neither any treatiſes on the ſubject, to aſſiſt us in the ſpeculative, nor maſters, in the practical part.

But as I believe, there are not any of my hearers, who do not wiſh that this matter might be carried farther, and that the art of ſpeak-

* This Diſſertation was delivered, as the eighth Lecture, cloſing the preceding courſe on Elocution.

ing might be introduced into this country, and eſtabliſhed upon ſuch a ſure foundation, as to be equally open to all who are deſirous of attaining it; I have purpoſely reſerved this laſt diſcourſe, to pave the way for an opening to a new courſe of lectures, which I intend to give in order to anſwer that end. And I have reaſon to hope from the nature of the courſe propoſed, that all who ſhall be at the pains of examining it, will entertain a more favourable opinion of the practicability of the deſign, than they could have done from any thing hitherto offered on the ſubject.

In order to this, the buſineſs of this day, ſhall be to trace the riſe and progreſs of elocution, in the country where it firſt had its birth, and arrived at its maturity; that we may be enabled to judge, whether if we apply to the ſame methods uſed there, we may not hope to attain equal perfection.

Of all the countries in the world, Greece ſeems to have been, conſtitutionally, the beſt formed, to bring the human language to perfection. Soon after the inhabitants were civilized, that region was divided into ſeveral ſmall ſtates, each of which had liberty for its object. Freemen, were not to be governed by force, like the vaſſals of deſpotiſm, but by perſuaſion. The power of perſuaſion therefore, was the greateſt

greateſt which could be poſſeſſed by any citizen; and the power of perſuaſion, depending upon the power of ſpeech, language of courſe became the chief object of attention, to all who were ambitious of obtaining ſuch power. And as, in order to perſuade, it was neceſſary both to pleaſe, and move the multitude; that language, which in itſelf contained, the powers of pleaſing and moving, was of courſe the moſt ſought after, and cultivated. It is evident, that this could be no other than the language of nature; expreſſed in tones, looks, and geſtures, which virtually contained thoſe powers. In the firſt rude eſſays of oratory, we may therefore conclude, that ſuch ſpeakers, as had the greateſt command of this language, had the greateſt power of affecting, and therefore were eſteemed the beſt.

To the bringing this language to perfection ſeveral points then contributed, which were not to be found ſince in other ſtates. In the firſt place, their attention was not divided, nor their judgments prejudiced, in favour of any other language, but that which was uttered by the organs of ſpeech, accompanied with its natural ſigns. Writing was little known amongſt them, and by thoſe who knew it, was made no other uſe of than to aſſiſt the memory. There was no preſs agoing at that time, to furniſh pamphlets

pamphlets for, or againſt any meaſure. There was no other general method of communication open, but by the living voice; and he who could not manifeſt his ſentiments by that, had no other way of making them known to the people.

In the ſecond place, they were under a neceſſity of taking nature for their guide, as their chief object was to move the human heart; which could be effected only by the uſe of ſuch ſigns, as nature herſelf has furniſhed with the power of doing ſo.

And laſtly, in ſuch free ſtates, they had the means of ſupplying themſelves with ſufficient ſtores of this copious language, which were denied to others. The book of the living language was open to them, in the great volume of ſociety; from which they might cull ſuch expreſſions, as they found to contain moſt energy or grace. Amongſt them, the free minds, unawed by fear, exerted all their vigour; gave way to every emotion; and every emotion was manifeſted by viſible, or audible ſigns. Out of theſe therefore, might every obſerver cull for his own uſe, ſuch as were moſt pleaſing, or moſt expreſſive.

Whilſt thus the language of nature was of courſe tending to perfection, that of the artificial kind was not neglected. And in the improvement

provement of this alſo, nature was their guide. For tho' in words there is ſomething wholly artificial and arbitrary, when we conſider them as combinations of letters to ſtand for ſigns of our ideas, yet it is nature that has furniſhed the elements, of which they are compoſed. Their number, kind, and proper uſe indeed ſhe has not thought proper to communicate, by any intuitive or inſtinctive perception; but left it to the pains of man to find out theſe, on the ſame general principle, by which the improvement of all his nobler faculties is left to human induſtry. But as theſe elements differ from each other, in the two articles neceſſary to their formation, ſound and time; ſome being pleaſing to the ear, ſome harſh; ſome taking up a ſhorter time in pronouncing, ſome a longer; this natural diſtinction in the elements, muſt neceſſarily make one in words; ſome of which will therefore, in their own nature, be more fitted to certain purpoſes, than others. But of this the ear being the ſole judge, who were ſo likely to attend to the juſt modulation of language, as thoſe nations, amongſt whom every thing of importance was carried on, thro' the means of language addreſſed to the ear; and to whom therefore it became neceſſary, that the ear ſhould be pleaſed? Nature has ſhewn us that this cannot be done for any length of time, without variety,

riety, and proportion. Variety depends upon the number of different ſounds which are uttered; and proportion upon the different degrees of time in which the ſounds are made. The language therefore which has the greateſt number of ſimple elements or letters, will be capable of the greateſt variety of ſounds; and thoſe which abound in long and ſhort ſounds, will admit of the greateſt variety of proportions. To ſuch ſtates therefore as I have been ſpeaking of, theſe points became objects of attention; and accordingly we find that the Greeks had five vowels, when the Africans were contented with three; and each of theſe five vowels had two quantities, long and ſhort, whilſt thoſe of barbarous nations were always long. But as the force and beauty of this variety of ſounds, and their proportions, depended upon their being properly mixed and blended in their ſeveral combinations; and the underſtanding as well as the ear was to be conſulted on this occaſion, ſince words are not merely ſounds, but are alſo types of ideas; let us ſee whether nature herſelf did not point out the way, to blend and proportion theſe properly, in ſpeech. Thoſe ſounds which are moſt pleaſing to the ear, are in their own nature moſt congruous to ſuch ideas as are moſt pleaſing to the mind; as thoſe of a harſher kind, to ſuch as are diſagreeable.

agreeable. And with reſpect to quantity or time, as it is natural to dwell upon ſuch words as convey the moſt important ideas, ſo is it to precipitate ſuch as are indifferent. In the one, the longer vowels and liquids ſhould predominate; in the other, their contraries. In both articles, the intermediate or indifferent, ſhould be proportionally marked, by a due intermixture. It was by this law of nature, not by chance, caprice, or faſhion, that the pronunciation of the Greek was firſt moulded, and afterwards improved to ſuch propriety and beauty of ſound, as was to be perceived in no other.

Their language, thus happily founded upon natural principles, was for the ſame reaſon, in a continual ſtate of improvement, till it arrived at perfection. Whilſt Greece maintained its independence, all meaſures were taken in conſequence of public deliberations and debates; in which of courſe the moſt powerful ſpeakers bore ſway. To make their ſons maſters of language, was therefore one of the chief objects of all the principal citizens. They did not leave it to chance, but from their earlieſt years, had them inſtructed in it, by ſkilful perſons. We learn from Pauſanias, that ſchools were opened for this purpoſe even ſo early as the time of Theſeus. And we find from Homer,

that

that the practice of eloquence and arms, formed the whole ſyſtem of education, in the time of the Trojan war. He makes old Phœnix ſay to Achilles, that his father Peleus had ſent him as his tutor, *in order to make him an able ſpeaker, and a ſkilful warriour.* And indeed as the liberty of all Greece, depended upon the wiſdom of the councils, of the united or confederated ſtates, and their valour in executing them, againſt the enormous power of Aſia; theſe muſt have been naturally, the ſtudy and employment of all their youth. Nor need we wonder, that eloquence had made ſo great a progreſs, as Homer deſcribes it to have done, in the time of the Trojan war; of which he has given ſuch noble, and different models, in the perſons of Neſtor, Ulyſſes, and Menelaus.

It was this neceſſity of perpetual confederacies between the ſeveral ſtates, either againſt each other, in their domeſtic wars; or in their union againſt the common enemy, the mighty Perſian, which afterwards kept alive, and promoted, the ſtudy of eloquence and improvement of language. The ableſt ſpeakers were always employed on this occaſion, from the time that Ulyſſes was diſpatched to the court of Peleus, to that in which Demoſthenes was ſent embaſſadour to Thebes. This muſt have excited the higheſt emulation amongſt them, and the

the utmoſt contention of excelling in that art. And this circumſtance it was, which obliged them always to take nature for their guide, in all the ſucceſſive improvements made in elocution, till it arrived at its utmoſt height. An advantage, which was no where to be had, but in the caſe of ſeveral independent ſtates, ſpeaking one common language, and having a free intercourſe with each other. This neceſſarily prevented any fantaſtical mode, any merely faſhionable manner of utterance, which might caſually take riſe in a particular ſtate, from ſpreading, or arriving at an invincible force, from cuſtom. This of courſe, made all the ſpeakers, in the ſeveral countries, ſearch out for ſuch ornaments and improvements, as had their foundation in nature only; as no other could produce any effect, upon the unprejudiced hearers of different ſtates; and no other therefore, were likely to be adopted into general uſe.

It is true, the ſeveral ſtates, tenaciouſly adhered to their ſeveral dialects, in their common uſe of ſpeech; but this was only an unimportant difference, in ſome ſmall points in the ſtructure of the artificial language, a thing merely arbitrary. But in all the forcible and important articles of natural language, in the uſe of tones, looks, and geſtures, they were

agreed. Beſides, the different dialects of Greece were not like ours, corruptions, or deviations from propriety; no, they were rather peculiar beauties, which each ſtate was proud of, and cultivated with care; and nothing but vanity in the other ſtates, could prevent their being adopted into general uſe, and all made part of the maſs of one language. And we find that ſeveral of their moſt eminent writers, made this uſe of them with great ſucceſs; and that their works were much ornamented, by the agreeable variety which this introduced into them.

Beſide the cauſes already mentioned, the general aſſembly of the Amphictiones, and the univerſal one of all Greeks at the Olympic games, where ſome of the nobleſt productions of their writers were recited, did not a little contribute to give ſanction to what was pure and natural; to check the growth of what was merely artificial and fantaſtical; and ſpread an univerſal good taſte.

As it has been laid down for a principle, that nature has furniſhed only the animal paſſions, with their concomitant ſigns and expreſſions, in a ſuitable degree; it may be ſaid, that the marks belonging to the emotions of the mind muſt be chiefly the work of art, and in affixing them caprice or fancy muſt bear great ſway.

But

But it muſt be remembered always, that tho' nature has not furniſhed our nobler faculties, with a language ready formed, as in the animal paſſions; yet has ſhe furniſhed the matter of which it is to be compoſed, and left it to man to modify that matter as he ſhould think proper; in which, as in all other inveſtigations of the intellectual kind, his induſtry, under the guidance of his reaſon, was to find out, what modification of that matter, would be moſt pleaſing and powerful, or in other words moſt conſonant to nature. To guide him in this enquiry, ſhe not only afforded him a ſufficient light in reaſon itſelf if improved; but furniſhed him with a perfect model, or pattern, for him to copy from. She had clearly pointed out to him in the animal language, that tones, looks, and geſtures only, could denote or communicate the animal paſſions; conſequently it was as clearly pointed out to him, to make uſe of thoſe as ſigns of all mental emotions. In the the animal paſſions, ſhe had ſuited the ſigns in the exacteſt manner to their ſeveral degrees, from the ſmalleſt perception, to the utmoſt violence of each. This gave the leſſon to man to ſettle all the proportions of the others, in the ſame exact degree. Nature made the ſigns of thoſe paſſions univerſally intelligible, being the ſame in all men; this ſhewed the way to ſocie-

ties, to make the ſigns of mental emotions as generally underſtood, by an agreement, and habit of uſing the ſame ſigns univerſally. This, from experience we ſee, might with proper attention eaſily be done; becauſe it is effected without trouble in the artificial language of words, by which our ideas are communicated; as without ſuch ſteady agreement in the uſe of the ſigns, diſcourſe would be unintelligible. The ſame agreement therefore, in the conſtant uſe of the ſame ſigns of the emotions, would make them equally underſtood by all.

But there is this important difference between ſettling the mode of the language of tones, looks, and geſtures, and that of articulate ſounds, that the former have a power from nature herſelf of producing emotions of ſome kind or other, but the latter have no natural power of exciting ideas. Conſequently the combinations of the latter may be much more an arbitrary work than of the former. Any combination of letters, however uncouth, may fairly ſtand as the mark of any idea, and in that capacity only fully anſwer its end. But it is not ſo with reſpect to tones, &c. for were thoſe which in their own nature are ſuited to expreſs ſively and agreeable emotions adapted to the words of ſorrow and diſtreſs; and ſo *vice verſa*, they would not only fail of their end, but the

the two languages would counteract each other. Yet thro' neglect and cuſtom, diſcord of this kind has been introduced into ſeveral nations; the tones accompanying ſome languages, appearing to a foreign ear, as if the ſpeakers were always in diſtreſs; and in others, as if they were always in rage. And indeed, thro' a neglect of attending to this language of nature, the tones and geſtures accompanying the ſpeech of moſt nations in the world, are either fantaſtical, diſcordant, or inſignificant. But it was not ſo in the land of eloquence; there it was of the utmoſt importance, that all the declarative ſigns of the mental emotions, ſhould be as exact, and as juſtly regulated, upon rational grounds, drawn from obſervations of nature, as thoſe of the animal paſſions; in order that they might produce the ſame effects, and be as univerſally intelligible. Nor did it require art and pains, or diving deep into the myſteries of nature, to effect this; it was accompliſhed by practice alone, long before ſpeculation was thought of. It has been already obſerved, that nature herſelf ſupplied the matter; no one who felt any ſimple emotion, if free from the influence of faſhion or habit, could be at a loſs for the kind of expreſſion, by which it was to be manifeſted; nature herſelf furniſhed him with that, as in the animal paſſions; the only differ-

ence was, that in the latter, ſhe adjuſted the exact proportions alſo; in the former, that was left to the care of man. In the latter, they were ſelf-evident, and produced analogous effects in the niceſt degree: in the former, they required ſome degree of compact and common uſe, as in words, to make their preciſe import known, and to produce proportional effects. But as there are alſo complex emotions of the mind, made out of ſeveral ſimple ones, here it was neceſſary that art ſhould ſtep in, blending properly the ſeveral degrees of tones belonging to the ſeveral ſimple ones, whereof the complex one was formed, according to their ſeveral degrees of aſcendency. And hence ariſes another reaſon in the nature of things, that the proportioning the ſeveral degrees of expreſſion in the mental emotions, muſt have been left chiefly to man, beſide that already mentioned, which is, that the animal paſſions are all ſimple, and might therefore have all their ſigns regularly ſettled by nature, in their due proportions; but many of the mental emotions, are complex, and made up of the united energies, of ſenſe, intellect, and fancy; to blend their ſeveral expreſſions therefore, muſt have been left to man, unleſs his free agency had been totally deſtroyed.

To

To hit upon theſe exact proportions therefore, it may be ſuppoſed that all public ſpeakers in the land of eloquence, tried their utmoſt ſkill; and experiment was the teſt of this. Thoſe which produced the ſtrongeſt effects, and excited in the hearers moſt powerfully, thoſe emotions which they were manifeſtly intended to rouſe by the ſpeaker, were allowed to be the beſt, adopted as ſuch, and univerſally imitated. Thus, in proceſs of time, ſuch tones, looks, and geſtures, as were moſt conſonant to nature, had the ſtrongeſt energy, and were beſt fitted to their ſeveral emotions; were univerſally received, underſtood, and felt; and became as generally uſed, and with as little variation, as words.

By theſe means, even in the midſt of wars and tumults, did language and elocution, attain their utmoſt growth and ſtrength. But ſtill to render them completely perfect, and fitted for every occaſion in life, ſome of the nicer delicacies, the finer ſtrokes of finiſhing, and laſt poliſh were wanting. This was reſerved for the workmanſhip of peace, to which the overthrow of Xerxes made way. Being now freed from the dread of the Perſian power, the Greeks had leiſure to apply themſelves to the peaceful arts, to the ſtudy of the ſciences, and extenſion of commerce. Theſe, in Athens par-

ticularly, from the nature of her conſtitution, flouriſhed to an eminent degree. Eloquence threw aſide her ſword and ſhield, and wore a ſofter form in the robe of peace. All the tender domeſtic ſenſations, all the delicacies of refined ſentiment, all the lively ſallies of fancy, and all the powers of ridicule, were indulged by a free and animated people. To theſe emotions alſo, were their ſeveral marks, both natural and artificial, aſſigned; upon the ſame principles, by the ſame experiment, and in the ſame exact proportions as thoſe before mentioned.

From their unbounded liberty, every one freely indulged his genius; yet was every one confined to that ſphere, for which nature herſelf deſtined him, by the talents with which ſhe endowed him: and this aroſe from the impoſſibility of ſucceeding in any attempts, for which they were not qualified, amongſt a people of ſuch exquiſite diſcernment; as well as from the dread of ridicule, which never failed to attend ſuch attempts. Thus was every faculty of man to be ſeen in that ſociety carried to the utmoſt perfection; as the induſtry of each individual, was employed in improving ſuch, as he poſſeſſed in the moſt eminent degree.

To follow nature was the univerſal rule, and the way was open and viſible to all. There were

were no prejudices from cuſtom to caſt a miſt over their ſight; from their infancy, genuine, unſophiſticated nature was before their eyes; and they grew up to as familiar an acquaintance with her, as with any external objects. Their diſtinguiſhing faculty in this reſpect, was in them a ſenſation, not a reflection; a perception, not a judgment. And their knowledge of her, intuitive, not demonſtrative. And whence came this, but that ſhe was really manifeſted to the ſenſes? They ſaw her, they heard her, they felt her, in her univerſally intelligible, and expreſſive language. So that were it poſſible to look into the human mind, they could not with more certainty know the emotions which paſſed there. Hence all the ſprings of the paſſions were open to them, and they knew how to wind them up, or relax them at pleaſure. Hence aroſe their accurate knowledge of the human heart, which they ſtudied in the original, in the great volume of ſociety: written in characters, formed by nature correſpondent to their archetypes, which could not be miſtaken or miſunderſtood. They never were ſo vainly employed as to ſearch for it in books, in the artificial characters of human invention, which have no affinity or natural connection with their archetypes, have no ſtamp of truth, wearing the ſame form in falſhood

as in truth, and utterly incapable of repreſenting or communicating emotions, by any power in themſelves. But to this have we been unfortunately reduced by the loſs of the language of nature. To which the invention of printing, and the conſequential application to book language only, has chiefly contributed.

Thus accuſtomed from their childhood to nothing but what was pure, juſt, and natural; the knowledge of all that was right or wrong in delivery, grew up with them, and became as it were part of their frame. They wanted no rules, no pieces of criticiſm, to direct them; they relied not on any ſlow proceſs, of at beſt doubtful judgment, which may ever be miſled by ſophiſtry; no, they had a quicker and ſurer criterion; they judged only from their feeling. Whatever was right, juſt, and proper in delivery, was in uniſon with that maſter ſtring; and produced concord. Whatever was otherwiſe, jarred upon it, and created diſcord. Thus each carried about him a touch-ſtone of truth, in his own breaſt; and upon comparing notes, they found it to be true as the needle to the pole. We are aſſured from all their writers, that there never was any difference of opinion in this reſpect, between the vulgar and the great; between the learned and illiterate. Simple, uncorrupt nature, felt and judged alike in all.

The

The leaſt impropriety in tone, look, or geſture was inſtantly felt by them, in the ſame manner as falſe concords in grammar, or falſe ſpelling is perceived by thoſe who are trained to the knowledge of book language amongſt us; but with this difference, that the former muſt have excited a ſtronger diſguſt, as it was an offence againſt nature; whereas the other, is only an errour in art. Nor was it in the natural language only, that they became thus accurately ſkilled; their judgments were as nice and correct, in the artificial language alſo. We are told, that if there was any fault committed, in pronouncing a ſyllable in the leaſt degree longer or ſhorter than its true quantity, or the leaſt failure in the proportion of any inſtituted tone or geſture, belonging to any word, phraſe, or ſentence, the whole aſſembly would cry out againſt it. And as in the former, their nice diſcernment had its foundation wholly in nature, ſo in the latter it had its foundation partly in nature, and partly in cuſtom; like the ſubject about which their perception was employed, being compounded of both. And cuſtom, by the concurrent agreement of all ſpeakers in the uſe of thoſe ſigns, being as uniform and general, as in thoſe of natural language, afforded the ſame ſure and general criterion. And thus did theſe Ancients really and truly poſſeſs that diſcerning power,

power, that intuitive perception of right and wrong, without waiting for the deductions of judgment, which the Moderns have in vain pretended to, in that fantaſtical faculty which they ſay they have found out in the human conſtitution, and to which they have given the name of Taſte. A term, grown into common uſe without any preciſe idea annexed to it. A term, which has puzzled the brains of many ingenious men to explain its meaning, hitherto to no purpoſe; as in the ſeveral eſſays which have been written on the ſubject, no two writers have agreed in their idea, definition, or deſcription of it. A term, which from the capricious uſe of it ſufficiently ſhows the chimerical origin of the faculty to which it is referred; being in truth a creature of fancy, without any exiſtence in nature; as obſcure and unintelligible as the occult qualities in philoſophy. And as a creature of fancy, is not only different in different nations, but in moſt individuals of the ſame nation. Changing perpetually like the faſhions of dreſs. And yet this is the principle, which the Moderns would make the univerſal criterion of what is right in the arts. How different was the criterion of the Ancients founded on nature! It was the ſame in all, and operated in the ſame way. The different nations of the world who viſited them, at once ſaw its beauty,

ty, and felt its force. Their works which remain built upon this principle, raiſe admiration in all mankind, in proportion as their prejudices are removed, and they are rendered capable of knowing nature in her true ſhape. They are addreſſed to the judgments and hearts of all men, and will remain whilſt there is any juſt underſtanding, any ſenſibility in the world, or an eternal rule of right known. Whilſt the works of taſte will periſh with every change of taſte; which from a love of novelty, will be brought about by every new artiſt, of ſufficient talents to captivate the fancy in a higher degree, or even in a different way from his predeceſſors. But we need not wonder that a fantaſtic principle was found out to judge of fantaſtic arts, (for ſuch in fact has been their ſtate amongſt the Moderns) when we find the dominion of fancy ſo far extended, as that riſibility has been conſtituted ſovereign over rationality, and ridicule made the ſtandard of moral truth.

But to return to the Ancients, whoſe nice and true diſcernment aroſe from their perpetual view of nature in her genuine ſhape. How difficult muſt it have been, for a public ſpeaker, to have pleaſed an auditory of ſuch exact judgment, and exquiſite ſenſibility! To articulate and pronouce well; to deliver proper ſentiments,

ſentiments, cloathed in ſuitable words, in a diſtinct and audible manner; were ſo far from being conſidered as things praiſe-worthy, that the ſmalleſt defects in any of theſe articles were looked upon as diſgraceful; and the perſon who laboured under any faults of this kind, was utterly diſqualified from appearing in public. Of this even the great Demoſthenes himſelf afforded a remarkable inſtance; for notwithſtanding the immenſe power of his genius, (which afterwards broke out with ſuch aſtoniſhing force) in his firſt attempts to ſpeak in public, he was hiſſed out of the aſſembly, on account of ſome defects of that kind; and he did not dare to appear before them again, till by inceſſant labour, he had got the better of thoſe faults. Nor need we wonder at this, when we conſider that all the eſſential properties of delivery, were endemious at Athens: The commoneſt citizens, in their common diſcourſe, never offended againſt propriety; and in that reſpect, the meaneſt, were on a par with their moſt eloquent orators. To give an inſtance of their great nicety in one article, the well-known ſtory of Theophraſtus. and the Athenian herbwoman will be ſufficient. He had reſided long at Athens, and piqued himſelf upon having acquired the utmoſt delicacy of Attic ſpeech; but one day upon aſking that herbwoman a queſtion,

tion, he had the mortification to hear himſelf in anſwer called, a Stranger. And upon enquiring how ſhe diſcovered him to be ſuch, ſhe anſwered, that 'he ſpoke too Attically.' How nice muſt have been the diſtinguiſhing faculty of the people in general, when even a right pronunciation, was not ſufficient, to make a man paſs upon one of the loweſt of them for a native, only becauſe it was not done with the ſame eaſe, which accompanied the ſpeech of all the natives.

To pleaſe ſuch a people therefore all the powers of oratory were neceſſary in the higheſt degree; and theſe comprehend all the nobleſt faculties that nature has given to man, improved to the utmoſt, by ſkill and practice. We find that they admitted none to be in the number of great orators, who had not an univerſal knowledge of every thing that regarded man, in his ſocial, and political ſtate. It was required that he ſhould be able to produce this knowledge, whenever called upon, without difficulty or heſitation. That he ſhould be inſtantly able to diſcloſe his thoughts, upon any ſubject of public debate, ranged in the cleareſt order, cloathed in the propereſt words, and thoſe words diſpoſed in ſuch manner, as ſhould at once enforce the meaning, and charm the ear. That he ſhould be a perfect maſter of the

paſſions,

paſſions, and know how to touch each ſtring belonging to them, with the ſame nicety as he who touched thoſe of the lyre. That he ſhould thus be able to excite in his hearers all kinds of emotions according to the nature of his ſubject. That he ſhould inſpire them with chearfulneſs, or cloud them with melancholy; make them laugh or weep, love or hate, envy or deſpiſe, at his pleaſure; that he ſhould move them to pity, or rouſe them to anger; excite alternately hope and fear, ſhame and penitence, in ſhort every paſſion of man. Beſides this there muſt run thro' the diſcourſe a certain inexpreſſible grace and elegance of manner; delicate ſtrokes upon occaſion of wit, and pleaſantry, and the whole ſeaſoned with that Attic ſalt, which alone could make it palatable, however good the food. When added to all this, we conſider, that this was to be done with ſo much eaſe, that there was not to be the leaſt appearance of art, the ſmalleſt particle of which, like leven, would ſour the whole lump, we muſt allow that to ſucceed in this way, muſt have been the higheſt effort of human nature. Such indeed it was conſidered, and therefore proportional pains were taken to qualify all ſuch as had talents in that way, for the arduous taſk; as it was the ſole object in view in their whole courſe of education, the knowledge of the military art only

only excepted. And what nobler object could there have been in view, than that which required, that all the faculties of man ſhould be improved to the higheſt pitch of perfection? Or what happier conſtitution of a ſtate, than that, which conferred power only on ſuch as had a natural right to it, by pre-eminence of faculties, and abilities to ſerve the ſtate? Nor was this left to opinion, nor could cunning and art avail in obtaining this preference; no, the ſeveral candidates were obliged to diſplay their abilities before judges of the moſt exquiſite diſcernment, who gave them credit for nothing in point of talents, which they were not able to manifeſt. Outward appearances and ſhew of wiſdom availed not there; a man was obliged to produce all the wealth of his mind to view, and he was rated according to the ſum he produced. No one could therefore paſs for rich, who was not ſo. Hence their avidity of knowledge was unbounded, and conſequently of power to communicate that knowledge in the readieſt, cleareſt, and moſt forcible manner. For without knowledge, ſpeech would have but little weight; without power of ſpeech, knowledge would have but little value. The neceſſary union of theſe in their higheſt perfection, which are the great ornaments of man, and which are the ſtrong characteriſtics that diſtinguiſh the hu-

man from the animal ſpecies, naturally brought about 'that golden period,' to uſe the words of a learned and ingenious writer, 'which ſeemed 'a providential event, in honour of human na-'ture, to ſhew to what perfection the ſpecies 'might aſcend.' How far the communication by the living voice, and the conſequential uſe and improvement of the language of nature, as well as that of art, contributed to produce this perfection, every one may determine for himſelf from what has been laid before him on that ſubject.

DISSERT-

DISSERTATION II.*

On the State *of* Language *in other Countries, but more particularly in our own, and its Conſequences.*

MY laſt courſe concluded with an account of the riſe and progreſs of Elocution in Greece, and the conſequential improvement of the Greek language to the utmoſt ſtate of perfection whereof it was capable. I ſhall introduce the preſent courſe, by taking a view of the ſtate of language in other countries, beginning firſt with the moſt ſavage.

As language is nothing elſe but a collection of ſymbols of ideas, and emotions, which paſs in the mind of man, it is evident that it muſt correſpond to the ſtate of the mind. In countries where people have but few ideas, they will of courſe have but few words. Where they have but few exertions of the intellect or

* This Diſſertation was intended as an introduction to a Courſe of Lectures, not yet delivered, on the Engliſh language, and is now firſt offered to the public.

fancy, they will have as few marks of thoſe exertions. Amongſt ſavages therefore the language belonging to the operations of the underſtanding, or fancy, is ſcarcely known. Their ideas extend but little beyond the neceſſaries of life, and their words are circumſcribed by their ideas. Accordingly we read of nations who have no terms for number beyond three. As the natives of ſuch countries, are little more than mere animals, ſo have they ſcarcely the uſe of any other but their animal faculties; and they have little more benefit from the uſe of ſpeech, than what animals have in the natural language of the paſſions, which they enjoy in common with them, and in equal perfection. The cauſe of the low ſtate of human nature in ſuch countries, is in general the difficulty that the inhabitants find in providing daily ſubſiſtence, which, thro' want of the uſeful arts, generally employs the chief part of their time, and leaves no room for the exertion, or improvement of their nobler faculties. As they alſo generally live in a ſtate of danger, the guarding againſt that, and taking care of ſelf-preſervation, employs whatever intervals of time there may be, not filled up with the providing of food.

Amongſt Barbarians born under leſs unhappy circumſtances, who being ſupplied more liberally with the neceſſaries of life by the bounty

bounty of nature, and living in a ſtate of greater ſecurity, there is leiſure for the exertion of other faculties. In this time of leiſure, when the animal appetites are ſatisfied, the mind being unreſtrained by fear, and the underſtanding unenlightened by knowledge, fancy of courſe exerts itſelf, and diſplays the rude powers of the imagination, in their public ſports, and feſtivities.

But as the ſallies of fancy, when not under the direction of the intellect, are wild and extravagant, their language, or expreſſions, muſt be ſo too; and however uſe may make them pleaſing to the natives, to all of other countries they appear abſurd and ridiculous. Of this our writers of voyages and travels, have furniſhed us with inſtances in abundance. The cuſtoms of theſe countries, not being founded in general, either on neceſſity or reaſon, but chiefly on caprice, from the fancy's bearing chief ſway in forming them, are much more numerous and irregular than in the countries before deſcribed; and conformable to their cuſtoms is their language, more copious, more fantaſtical.

In ſtates where the introduction of the arts produces trade and commerce, the ideas of the people multiply in proportion to the number of objects about which their minds are converſant; and their words, or language of ideas,

increaſe in the ſame degree. If trade be carried no farther than to ſupply the conveniencies of life in a moderate degree, and it ſhould require the exertion of conſtant induſtry to effect this, there will be little room in ſuch ſtates, for the improvement and exerciſe of the nobler faculties of the intellect and imagination, and their language, will be proportionally defective. If thro' the extenſiveneſs of trade and commerce, much wealth ſhould be poured into ſuch countries, and the ſuperfluity of wealth ſhould be converted to the purpoſes of the groſſer kind of luxury, in gratifying chiefly the ſenſual appetites, there alſo, the improvements of the underſtanding and fancy will be neglected, and the language of the inhabitants accordingly circumſcribed by their ſordid ideas. Such was the caſe of the Carthaginians of old, of whoſe language, as not worth preſerving, no trace remains; and amongſt whom we never heard of any famous philoſopher, poet, or orator; nor of any celebrated maſters in the polite arts. Very ſimilar to the ancient Carthaginians are the modern Dutch.

Beſide theſe ſeveral ſtates, there have been enormous empires in the world, ſubject to deſpotic rule. In governing the ſubjects of ſuch empires, their reaſon is not to be applied to, nor conſequently their intellectual faculties

cultivated.

cultivated. All their paſſions alſo, but that of fear, muſt be kept under; they are therefore not to be governed by perſuaſion, and thence the talents of perſuaſion become unneceſſary. Force only can ſupport tyranny, and mere brutal force is in the multitude: but fear will deſtroy all uſe of force, and turn the balance of power in favour of the few. Fear reſides in the imagination; over that faculty therefore is the aſcendency to be obtained. For this purpoſe an order of men is inſtituted, dependant on the tyrant, who by religious fear mould the imagination of the multitude to what form they pleaſe, render them unconſcious to their ſtrength, and break them into tame beaſts of burthen. The people in ſuch ſtates of courſe fall into three claſſes; the multitude, or plebeians, who in the midſt of natural plenty are reduced nearly to the want of ſavages, and are almoſt in an equal ſtate of ignorance: The few, or nobles, to whom the tyrant delegates part of his power, and a diſproportionate ſhare of property; who riotouſly wallow in that plenty, which ariſes from depriving the multitude of that ſhare of the goods of nature which was their due; and indulge themſelves in ſenſual gratifications, and ſuch amuſements of fancy as are cuſtomary in their country: And laſtly the order of prieſthood, whoſe chief employment

it is to cultivate their own intellectualfaculties, ſo far only, as is neceſſary to procure to themſelves ſufficient knowledge to keep the people in awe, and to preſerve their own power, as well as that of the tyrant, as mutual ſupports to each other.

In ſuch countries, it is evident, that none of the nobler faculties of the mind, can be brought to any degree of perfection. The rich and the poor are nearly in an equal ſtate of ignorance; a moderate degree of knowledge therefore in the third order, will be ſufficient to keep the other two in a ſtate of ſubjection. And as the end which they ſeek by ſuch knowledge, is power; not over the underſtanding, which would require that of the intellectual kind, and ſuch as is founded in reaſon; not over the paſſions, which would demand that which is perſuaſive, and founded in nature; but over the imagination, which is ever moſt powerfully wrought upon, by that which is marvellous, and unintelligible; their labours are not employed in acquiring an inſight into ſuch things as have truth and nature for their foundation, in order to convince the underſtanding, or move the heart; but either in framing ſuch ſyſtems, founded upon chimerical principles, the creatures of their own fancy, as would make the ſtrongeſt impreſſions on the fancies of others;

or if they dive into the ſtudy of nature, it is only to obtain a knowledge of ſuch ſecrets in natural philoſophy, as may countenance their pretenſions to magic, amongſt a people utterly ignorant of cauſe and effect. Accordingly the ſecrets of an unknown world, judicial aſtrology, divination, religious rites and ceremonies, natural magic, &c. ſeem to have made up the chief part of the knowledge, to be found in the order of prieſthood in all ſuch countries. Such was the ſtate of things in the great empires of the Eaſt, and their language was ſuitable to the ſtate of things. This has been well deſcribed, by the ingenious author of a Philoſophical Enquiry into Language, or univerſal grammar. He ſays, 'The Eaſtern world, from 'the earlieſt days, has been at all times, the 'ſeat of enormous monarchy. On them fair 'liberty never ſhed its genial influence. If at 'any time civil diſcords aroſe among them, '(and ariſe there did innumerable,) the conteſt 'was never about the form of their govern-'ment, (for this was an object about which the 'combatants had no conception,) it was all 'from the poor motive of, who ſhould be their 'maſter; whether a Cyrus or an Artaxerxes, a 'Mahomet or a Muſtapha. Such was their 'condition! And what was the conſequence? 'Their ideas became conſonant to their ſervile 'ſtate,

'ſtate, and their words became conſonant to 'their ſervile ideas. The great diſtinction for 'ever in their ſight was that of tyrant and ſlave; 'the moſt unnatural one conceivable, and the 'moſt ſuſceptible of pomp, and empty exag-'geration. Hence they talked of kings, as 'gods; and of themſelves, as of the meaneſt 'and moſt abject reptiles. Nothing was either 'great or little, in moderation, but every ſen-'timent was heightened by incredible hyper-'bole. Thus tho' they ſometimes aſcended 'into the great and magnificent, they as fre-'quently degenerated into the tumid and bom-'baſt. The Greeks too of Aſia became in-'fected by their neighbours, who were often at 'times not only their neighbours, but their 'maſters; and hence that luxuriance of the 'Aſiatic ſtyle, unknown to the chaſte elo-'quence, and purity of Athens.'

From a review of all the nations of antiquity, we ſhall find that the human language was but little advanced towards perfection, excepting amongſt the Greeks and Romans. The different forms of the different languages of the world, neceſſarily aroſe from the different forms into which the human mind was moulded in the ſeveral countries, of which language was the copy. And the mind took its form from the different degrees of aſcendency, which the three

three great powers by which it is governed, obtained: I mean, Reaſon, Fancy, Paſſion. In Greece, where the rational faculties held their due rank, in governing the reſt, and regulating the fancy and the paſſions; the human mind had its due ſhape, proportion, and complexion; and correſpondent to that was the ſize, ſymmetry, and beauty of their language, which was its tranſcript. Conviction, and perſuaſion, being amongſt them eſſential to government, the language by which theſe ends were to be obtained, muſt have had its foundation in reaſon and nature. In countries, where paſſion had the aſcendency, the mind reduced to an almoſt brutal ſtate, expreſſed itſelf chiefly in the language of brutes. In thoſe ſtates where the uſeful arts only were introduced, or the attention of the people was wholly engaged by commerce, the language was chiefly formed to anſwer thoſe ends. And in thoſe larger empires, where government was carried on by working on the imagination, fancy bore the chief ſway, and their language of courſe was fantaſtical.

To ſome of the above deſcriptions may all the languages of antiquity be referred, as well as thoſe of the greateſt part of nations, now inhabiting three quarters of the globe. But with regard to moſt of the languages at this

this time ſpoken in Europe, a new accidental cauſe produced remarkable effects, and turned things in a great meaſure out of the uſual and natural courſe.

When the Goths and Vandals had put an end to the language, as well as the empire of the Romans, the barbarous manners and ſpeech of thoſe rude nations, ſupplanted the more poliſhed Roman, in all places where they made ſettlements, and the greateſt part of Europe was reduced almoſt to the loweſt ſtate of barbariſm; in which it remained during many ages. At length in the fifteenth century, the languages and arts of old Greece and Rome, had as it were a reſurrection from the tombs in which they had ſo long been buried. This could not fail of effecting a remarkable change in the manners of thoſe nations, where theſe languages and arts were introduced. From barbarous and brutal, they gradually became more poliſhed and humane; and a long night of ignorance, was ſucceeded by a dawn of knowledge, which promiſed a glorious day. They were no longer circumſcribed, by the narrow compaſs of ideas, with which their own language and cuſtoms might furniſh them, like former countries in the ſame circumſtances with themſelves; no, they had an immenſe hoard of knowledge, the painful collection of ages,

amongſt

amongſt the wiſeſt and moſt civilized nations that had ever inhabited this globe, at once preſented to view, and offered to their uſe. And happy had it been for theſe times if our anceſtors had known how to make a proper uſe of this treaſure, ſo as to enrich themſelves to the degree that they might have done, and to have handed down the noble inheritance to poſterity. But inſtead of applying the funds of moral and political knowledge, found in the works of ancient authors, to the amendment of their ſeveral political ſtates; inſtead of endeavouring to improve their own languages, by the noble models that were preſented to them in thoſe of Greece and Rome; men of the brighteſt parts, applied themſelves every where to the acquirement of a critical ſkill in thoſe languages, without any other end in view; and thoſe of more ſolid underſtandings, were wholly ingroſſed by the ſtudy of the worſt part of ancient literature handed down to us, that of the Greek philoſophy. Which being in general founded in errour, as it occaſioned endleſs controverſies amongſt the Ancients themſelves, could not fail of producing the ſame effects amongſt the Moderns. Thus a general ſpirit of pedantry in polite literature, from which the preſent times are far from being free, prevailed in Europe; and falſe ſyſtems of philoſophy, which have

been but lately overthrown, were every where eſtabliſhed. How far this ſpirit of pedantry, and the general application of men of the greateſt abilities, might have affected the political intereſts of the ſeveral ſtates of Europe, is beyond my preſent purpoſe to enquire. I ſhall only obſerve by the way, that previous to the revival of letters, moſt of the governments eſtabliſhed by our Gothic anceſtors, were either free, or the people engaged in ſtruggles for their freedom. But in all thoſe countries where this ardour for ancient literature prevailed, they loſt their liberty. And this was an effect naturally to be expected; for when men of the greateſt abilities in a ſtate, who alone are capable of oppoſing or fruſtrating the deſigns of an ambitious prince, withdraw from the active, to the contemplative life, they leave the field open for tyranny to enter, and range in at large.

But it is immediately to my point to enquire what effect this had upon language, and more particularly upon that of our own country. There are two kinds of language, by which the underſtanding may be enlightened, and the mind of man formed; the ſpoken, and the written: the one conveyed to the mind thro' the ear, by the voice uttering articulate ſounds or words; the other preſented to the eye, by means of viſible marks. And it is generally

thought that the one is equally well calculated to anſwer the end as the other. But as I have in my former courſe demonſtrated that this opinion is erroneous, and that ſome of the nobleſt purpoſes of ſocial communication, cannot poſſibly be attained, by any language but that which proceeds from the living voice, it is a matter of great moment to conſider, what the conſequence muſt be, of giving the preference to written language in any country; more eſpecially in ours, who have not only given the preference to it, but employed all our pains about that, neglecting utterly that which is ſpoken. A circumſtance in which we differ from the practice of all civilized nations, ancient and modern.

In order to this let us compare the conduct of the Greeks in this reſpect, with our own, article by article, and ſee what good and bad effects naturally and neceſſarily followed from the different methods.

The GREEKS	The ENGLISH
Employed their chief care and attention about their *living tongue.*	About their written language.
They examined the power of ſounds in the ſimple elements or letters	*We* learn to know the letters that repreſent thoſe ſounds in writing,

ters with the utmoſt nicety; whether they were long or ſhort, ſmooth or harſh, ſtrong or weak.

They learned to pronounce ſyllables and words with the greateſt exactneſs of proportion both in time and ſound, or quantity and quality.

They were taught to deliver their ſentiments, or repeat the productions of others, in all the variety of tones, that nature or art had ſupplied, as expreſſions of the ſeveral paſſions, emotions of the mind, or exertions of the fancy; and theſe were accompanied

writing, without enquiring at all into the power or nature of thoſe ſounds, ſo repreſented.

We to pronounce ſyllables and words without regard either to the one or the other; and it is only neceſſary that the learners ſhould ſhew by their pronunciation, that they know what ſyllables and words the letters ſtand for.

We are taught to deliver our own exerciſes, or the works of others, with little or no variation of voice, or elſe with ſome diſagreeable diſcordant cant, applied to all ſentences alike; without any accompaniments of looks or geſture, or elſe with ſuch as are improper,

panied with ſuitable looks and geſture. All three in uniſon to each other, and forming perfect harmony, by obſerving the niceſt relative proportions in each.

Their public ſpeakers could gain attention upon whatever topic they ſpoke, from the mere delight that people took in liſtening to them: But upon any ſubject that concerned the temporal intereſts of their auditors, they could work upon their paſſions in ſuch a way, as to deter them from what appeared wrong, and incite them to the purſuit of what was right.

Amongſt them, attention to exactneſs in uttering ſound, produced an equal attention

improper, ungraceful, or diſguſting.

The moſt numerous body of our public ſpeakers, who have their choice of all manner of topics, in which not only the temporal, but the eternal intereſts of mankind, are moſt nearly concerned, are ſo far from working upon men to purſue their true intereſts, that they have it not in their power even to gain their attention.

Amongſt us, thro' the want of conſidering the nature and power of ſounds, our written

tion to exactneſs in marking thoſe ſounds in writing; which was done by them in the moſt preciſe, clear, and uniform manner; ſo that to pronounce the words properly at ſight, required little more than a thorough knowledge of the letters which compoſed them; and to ſpell them properly in writing, little more was neceſſary than to be able to form the letters, both in natives, and foreigners who learned their tongue.

Their words were always ſpelt, as they were pronounced.

Their writers, being perfect maſters of compoſition, which they were regularly taught, always ſuited their numbers to their ſubject;

alphabet is ſo defective, and our manner of ſpelling words, ſo irregular, that a juſt pronunciation, and proper manner of ſpelling words, are acquired only by a few of the natives, and are almoſt impracticable to foreigners.

Our's ſeldom.

Our's, ignorant of all principles of compoſition, which they are never taught, write wholly from ear, and in much the ſame kind

ject; and arranged their words in such a way in metre, as might give the most forcible expression to their sentiments, and afford the greatest variety of numbers, so as to please, without cloying the ear, when repeated.

They had music masters whose chief office it was to teach people a well-measured and harmonious delivery; by which all so instructed acquired an article of the utmost importance in public life, and a most pleasing ornament in private intercourse.

They had dancing masters whose chief office

kind of numbers, whatever be the subject. Instead of variety and expression, melody and smoothness are chiefly attended to both in their periods and verses, by those who are most in vogue. This produces an uniformity, which in any long work becomes insupportable to the ear, and of course wearies attention.

We have music masters to teach the few who have good voices and talents in that way to sing, which can be of no benefit but to those who are to get their livelihood by it, and is seldom attained by others in such a degree as even to be an ornament.

We have dancing masters whose princi-

fice it was to regulate all the motions of the human frame, and all the attitudes of the body, in ſuch a way as that whether walking or ſtanding ſtill; ſpeaking or liſtening; running or wreſtling; in the roſtrum or in the palæſtra; the human figure ſhould always appear graceful.

The Greek artiſts had the higheſt advantage in having theſe living models thus perfectly prepared to their hands. Their painters and ſtatuaries had nothing to do but to copy from innumerable ſubjects in life the moſt perfect figures of grace and expreſſion, belonging to all the nobler and more elevated emotions of the mind, to

pal employment it is to teach one poor unmanly French dance, in which ſo few arrive at any degree of excellence, that it is offenſive to ſuch as have any juſt ideas of grace, to look at them when they are performing it.

Our artiſts, if they draw after life, can exhibit only ſuch figures as are to be ſeen in life. They muſt be contented with drawing unmeaning or aukward portraits. Grace and expreſſion belonging to the nobler emotions are to be found only in the remains of antiquity; thoſe that are low and mean have been admirably done from

to be daily ſeen in their orators.

Their artiſts by attending to the effects produced by the orators upon different parts of the auditory, according to their different tempers and diſpoſitions, could ſee all the different degrees of expreſſion belonging to any emotion, from its ſlighteſt, to its moſt forcible expreſſion, and apply it to uſe in their ſeveral hiſtory pieces.

Their muſical compoſers had the ſame advantage in borrowing from the public ſpeakers all the fineſt tones belonging to the emotions and paſſions, which tranſplanted into their vocal muſic, and adorned by the ſuperior

from life by the inimitable Hogarth. A ſad ſatyr on the times!

Our artiſts, if they look for any ſuch amongſt the auditory, either in the ſenate-houſe or at the bar, may ſee abundance either of abſent, or merely attentive faces; or if they are deſirous of drawing a ſleeping piece, they may be furniſhed with good patterns, from the firſt drowſy nod, to the profound ſnore, by viſiting our churches.

Our muſical compoſers, having no archetypes of this ſort, from which they may borrow the true tones, of the finer emotions and paſſions; or not knowing how to adapt theſe to words, ſtrive only to pleaſe the fancy by

perior charms of the ſinging voice, ſunk deep into the heart, and produced the moſt powerful effects upon the mind.

The Greeks ſtudied no language but their own; in conſequence of which they became perfect maſters of its grammar, its proſody, and the meaning of its words; in ſhort of every part of their language, relative either to ſound or ſenſe.

novelty, variety, difficulty of execution, or noiſy choruſſes, and their compoſitions are chiefly calculated to gratify the ear.

We employ the beſt part of our time in the ſtudy of other languages, to the utter neglect of our own. In conſequence of which we ſcarcely know any thing of the grammar or proſody of our tongue; and the meaning of our words is very vague and indeterminate.

This compariſon might be extended to a much greater length in many other articles, but enough has been ſaid to ſerve as a clue to the curious reader, if he is inclined to follow the ſubject farther. And upon ſuch an enquiry, how far ſoever carried, he will find that the Ancients had no advantage over us in any reſpect, but what aroſe from cultivating the language of nature, delivered by the living

man;

man; inſtead of the language of art, offered to the eye in the dead letter.

The genius, capacity, and manners of a nation, can be eſtimated by nothing ſo well as the ſtate of their language. We all allow that the underſtanding of a people muſt be limited by the number of ideas; and the number of ideas by the number of words which are in uſe. Where a language contains but a few words, the ideas of a people muſt be as few; or at leaſt the power of communicating thoſe ideas muſt be limited to the number of their ſymbols.

Upon the ſame principle, the powers of fancy, and emotions of the mind, muſt be circumſcribed by the number of tones, looks, and geſtures, in general uſe; as furniſhed by nature, or agreed upon by compact, to be their repreſentatives. As in the one caſe, where there are but few words in uſe, there will be but few ideas; ſo in the other, where tones, looks, and geſtures are few, there will be as few feelings.

And as the want of regularity and preciſion in the uſe of words, muſt occaſion diſorder in the exerciſe of the intellectual faculties; ſo muſt the ſame cauſes produce ſimilar effects, in the exertions of fancy, and emotions of the heart.

If this be the caſe, as it indiſputably is, there can be no object of ſuch importance to any nation as the improvement, and regulation of their language, ſince it is in vain without that to expect the improvement and regulation of the minds of the natives; as language is the great inſtrument, by which the human mind is ſhaped, and fitted for all purpoſes in life.

This opens a queſtion, the diſcuſſion of which is of no ſmall moment. That is, "Whether the ſtate of language be an effect, or a cauſe of the ſtate of the human mind in any country."

Among nations who from the beginning left their language wholly to chance, who never ſought to increaſe their ſtock of ideas, but were contented with ſuch, as neceſſarily forced themſelves upon them, by the objects that ſurrounded them; and had no other feelings but what were caſually excited by their natural paſſions; their language was thought to be complete, when they had marks for all ſuch ideas and feelings; and the poverty of their language was ſo far an effect of the narrowneſs of their comprehenſion. But when it had thus reached its full growth, it ever after became a cauſe of the ſame narrowneſs of comprehenſion, in all ſucceeding generations, as in ſuch countries, the faculties of the mind could not be exerted, beyond the limits of their language.

Such

Such has been the ſtate of moſt ſavage countries; the ſucceſſive generations of which, bore an exact reſemblance to thoſe that preceded, like ſucceſſive races in the animal tribes.

In a country ſuch as ancient Greece, where the ſtudy and improvement of language, from the motives aſſigned in the former Diſſertation, was an object of attention in all the chief inhabitants, the minds of the people were daily gathering new ſtores of ideas, and conſequently increaſing the number of words which were to ſtand as their ſymbols. Multiplicity of words brought on a neceſſity of digeſting them in proper claſſes, and reducing them to order, to prevent confuſion. This opened the large field of grammar, which gave ample ſcope to the exerciſe of underſtanding; and that of poetry, which under the direction of grammar, at once exerciſed the talents of the fancy, and afforded a rational entertainment to the mind.

Words being thus regulated both in point of ſenſe and ſound, by grammar and poetry, were finely prepared for the uſe of the public ſpeakers. This opened to them the immenſe region of rhetoric and oratory, in which all the nobleſt faculties of man, whether of mind or body, the head or heart, the fancy or the paſſions, might be improved to their utmoſt perfection, and diſplayed in their utmoſt force.

That from this fountain naturally flowed the perfection of the liberal arts, has been already ſhewn. In Greece therefore a nattention to language, was the firſt cauſe of the improvements made in the nobler faculties of the mind; and this cauſe continued to operate on all riſing generations, till the language became as perfect, and the faculties of the mind arrived at as great degree of excellence, as is almoſt poſſible to be attained in our mortal ſtate, without the aid of revelation.

There is another caſe, in which language is evidently the ſole cauſe of improving the mind; and that is when a copious and well-regulated language is brought from one country to another, and becomes the ſtudy of the principal inhabitants, in preference to their rude vernacular tongue. This was the caſe of the old Romans, who had their youth inſtructed in the Greek tongue; and of moſt modern European ſtates, amongſt whom both Greek and Latin have been the chief ſtudies of their youth, during more than two centuries. But very different was the effect produced by the introduction of the Greek amongſt the old Romans, from what the ſtudy of both thoſe languages has had amongſt us; for this plain reaſon, that the Greek tongue was introduced into Rome, whilſt it was yet ſpoken by the inhabitants of

Greece,

Greece, in its utmoſt purity; and taught by Rhetoricians from Greece, capable of inſtructing their pupils in all its niceties and delicacies, both with regard to ſenſe and ſound, and all the graces of action accompanying delivery.

The conſequence was, that the Romans thus enlightened, applied themſelves cloſely to the regulation and refinement of their own tongue, ſo as to make it reſemble as much as poſſible the beautiful models which they had before them: And being then a free people, greedily embraced the opportunity of introducing all the graces of delivery, as taught by the Greek Rhetoricians, into their public aſſemblies. And this was done with ſo much ardour, that in leſs than half a century, they almoſt rivalled their great maſters in beauty of language, and powers of elocution.

Here we ſee an entire revolution brought about in a whole nation, merely by the introduction of the ſtudy of a new language. The Romans ſuddenly emerged from barbariſm. From a ſtate of ignorance with reſpect to every thing, but the arts of war and civil polity, their minds were of a ſudden enlightened, with all the noon-day blaze of knowledge and the polite arts, which had for many centuries been gradually riſing to their meridian in Greece. And probably had they preſerved their liberty

for

for two or three centuries after this æra, they would have extended their knowledge, enlarged and improved all the faculties of the human mind, to a higher pitch even than their maſters had done. At leaſt we have reaſon to judge ſo, from the rapid progreſs made in the ſciences and arts, during a ſpace of time not exceeding the common life of a man.

But this rapid progreſs was not made, by ſitting down in their ſtudies, and paſſing their time in a blind and uſeleſs admiration of the Greek writings, and the works of their artiſts; no, it was by doing as the Greeks did, by taking pains to enrich and poliſh their own language, by borrowing freely from the Grecian ſtores, and reducing every thing to rule and order. By inſtructing their children, in all the peculiar properties, and niceties of their mother tongue, and in all the arts of adorning their ſpeech by the graces of delivery. By a generous emulation in contending for the palm, with their moſt famous hiſtorians, poets, orators, and artiſts; not by a ſervile imitation of their works, but by making themſelves maſters of the principles and rules belonging to the ſeveral ſciences and arts; by laying in a fund of their own, and drawing out of their own ſtores.

The

The revival of the Greek and Roman languages, did not produce ſimilar effects amongſt us. They were introduced to us in their dead ſtate, long after they had ceaſed to be ſpoken in their purity; and there were no maſters to inſtruct us in their true pronunciation, intonation, and graces of delivery. Theſe therefore were entirely neglected, and our whole attention was employed about the written language. Great pains were taken with regard to underſtanding theſe languages, and learning the rules of their grammar and proſody, whilſt we never ſo much as turned our thoughts to the examination of our own. By adopting numbers of their words indeed our language was much enlarged, but theſe were only thrown into the rude heap, which by continual additions from thoſe and many other languages, without regard to any rule or order, became an unwieldy maſs, irregular and miſhapen. Hence the learned compiler of the Engliſh Dictionary ſays, 'When I 'took the firſt ſurvey of my undertaking, I found 'our ſpeech copious without order, and ener-'getic without rules; wherever I turned my 'view, there was perplexity to be diſentangled, 'and confuſion to be regulated.' This diſorder and irregularity of the language, neceſſarily infected the mind, and bred confuſion there. The number of our ideas was greatly increaſed, but

but the want of reducing them to order, and making them correſpond exactly to their ſigns, produced obſcurity and errour. Total ignorance with regard to many points was removed; but to this ſucceeded abundance of falſe knowledge, far worſe than total ignorance; and this, by means of the preſs, has had a briſk circulation through the land. Some few indeed who took the pains to make themſelves maſters of the written language, improved their intellectual faculties to the height, and have given to the world admirable treatiſes, in philoſophy, mathematics, morality, and politics; to effect which a maſtery of the artificial language of ideas only was requiſite, and might be performed by men born deaf; and theſe treatiſes are read, or at leaſt underſtood only by a few. Whilſt the language of nature, expreſſive of emotions, and declarative of the ſeveral feelings of the heart, and exertions of the fancy; a language for which there is conſtant uſe both in public aſſemblies, and private intercourſe; a language capable of making the ſtrongeſt impreſſions, and of being underſtood by all without pains or ſtudy; was almoſt deſtroyed by this attention to book-language.

The few writers amongſt us, who underſtood any thing of the power of ſounds, and diſplayed their ſkill by a diverſity of harmony

in their compoſitions, have uſed their talents to little purpoſe, as their beauties in that reſpect, are loſt to moſt readers. For as ſuch compoſitions draw their whole power from being properly delivered by the living voice, their beauty cannot be perceived, but when they are ſo delivered: and this can but ſeldom be the caſe, as not only there are no pains taken to acquire the art of delivery, (an art in which of all others moſt pains are requiſite to attain perfection) but, as I have ſhewn before, there are pains taken in teaching the written language, to prevent a poſſibility of our arriving at excellence in the delivery of it; and to turn us from the natural expreſſions of the paſſions and fancy, to certain artificial modes utterly incompatible with thoſe.

Elocution therefore has been in a much worſe ſtate ſince the introduction of letters, than it could have been before, when left wholly to nature. The emotions then, however rudely, were ſtill forcibly expreſſed, borrowing their power from feeling, unſophiſticated by art. Of this we have inſtances at this day amongſt the illiterate vulgar; the meaneſt of whom, when impaſſioned, delivers himſelf better than our moſt eminent orators; I do not mean in choice of words, but in the uſe of their concomitant ſigns, tones, looks, and

and geſture. And we are told that amongſt the ſavages of North America, the ſpokeſmen who come down with what is called by them *a Talk* to our governors, deliver themſelves with great energy, untutored by any ſchool-miſtreſs but nature. But were theſe ſavages to be taught our written language by our maſters, we ſhould ſoon find them delivering themſelves as ill as we do.

If the greateſt part of our time in acquiring book-language, be employed about ſtudies which are of little or no uſe in ſociety, the mind ſurely gets a wrong bias, in being thus turned from the active to the contemplative life, from practical duties, to vain ſpeculations. But ſuppoſing, in our courſe of education, the utmoſt care were taken to ſtore the mind with plenty of the moſt uſeful ideas, to give ſtrength and vigour to the underſtanding, and force and perſpicacity to reaſon; yet the work is but half performed, if at the ſame time, the means are not ſupplied of diſplaying theſe faculties to others, in their full power and beauty. A man may indeed be himſelf the better for theſe acquirements, if he applies them to uſeful purpoſes; but his neighbours can be no farther benefited by them, than in proportion as he is able to manifeſt them in diſcourſe.

Scire

Scire tuum nihil eſt, niſi te ſcire hoc, ſciat alter.

Does not the neglect of this uſeful branch of education, tend to make men miſers in knowledge, to brood in ſecret over their hoard of ideas, to engage in ſelfiſh purſuits, and to make wiſdom degenerate into cunning? Whilſt on the contrary, he who is able to diſplay his talents in their full force and beauty, takes a delight in doing ſo; he receives a high gratification, from the very act of communicating his ideas and emotions in ſuch a way, as gives pleaſure to his hearers, and procures him honour and eſtimation, from all with whom he converſes. He ſeeks out company for this reaſon, and delights in ſociety: his ſocial paſſions, being thus conſtantly exerciſed, become predominant, and exert themſelves vigorouſly on all proper occaſions. Whilſt the ſilent thinker, or the bookiſh man, finding that he cannot expreſs himſelf before company, in a manner pleaſing to them, or ſatisfactory to himſelf, avoids ſociety, retires to ſolitude where he indulges himſelf in thinking, to the utter ſtarving of all his other faculties.

And as the underſtanding, tho' it be the firſt, is not the only part of the mind; as the fancy and the paſſions occupy a large portion of it; the proper exerciſe and regulation of theſe are

of the utmoſt importance to man, not not only with regard to all the moſt refined and conſtant pleaſures, which our nature is capable of enjoying, but alſo with regard to morals. For had men the power at all times of furniſhing to themſelves, and others, the exquiſite pleaſures ariſing from the elegant exertions of the fancy, and from the generous and humane ſenſibilities of the heart; pleaſures, which far from cloying, always increaſe by enjoyment, and which are ever attended with the delightful ſenſe of ſelf-approbation; men would not waſte ſo much of their time, in brutal and ſenſual gratifications, which in the enjoyment are ever unſatisfactory, are reflected on with diſguſt, and often with remorſe.

All the higheſt delights ariſing from the exertions of man's nobler faculties, are compriſed in the ſingle article of a juſt and graceful elocution: and all the powers of the fancy, all the feelings of the heart, as well as the moſt animated efforts of the underſtanding, are to be exerciſed ſo as to obtain their full ſtrength, and ſhaped ſo as to obtain their perfect beauty, by that alone: and thus ſtrengthened and adorned, are to be manifeſted to others, only in that way.

Mankind, in general, charmed with the external manifeſtation of theſe powers belonging to

to the human mind, but which they had not conſtant opportunities of enjoying; grew fond of the means of reviving the ideas of the originals, and of having copies of them in their poſſeſſion. Hence aroſe the cultivation of the imitative arts. Statues repreſent the figure of ſuch ſpeakers in the moſt graceful attitudes, and with ſtrong expreſſion of countenance. Painting does the ſame, but in a more enlarged ſphere, as it takes in multitudes of figures, and with a greater reſemblance to nature, from the force of colours. The muſical compoſer catches the tones of the paſſions from the orator, and blending theſe with the ſweet notes of his art, gives them an irreſiſtible power over the human heart. The poet too learns from him all the tones belonging to the fancy and the paſſions, and by a juſt arrangement of his words, ſuperadds the charms of harmony to them, when properly recited, as in muſical compoſitions when properly ſung.

In this deſcription of the arts, I ſpeak of them as they were, when they might be ſaid to be alive, and ſomething ſubſtantial, as in old Greece; not thoſe phantoms which have appeared in their ſimilitude amongſt us; thoſe chimeras which modern invention has produced, Ixion-like, from the embraces of a cloud, inſtead of a Juno. And which, like clouds,

are perpetually changing their ſhape and colour as they are wafted about by the breath of faſhion.

Such ſhadowy arts leave no more impreſſion on the mind, than ſucceſſive landſcapes ſhewn by a camera obſcura. Their end being to pleaſe the fancy, they are governed by fantaſtical principles, which conform themſelves to all the caprices of fancy. Fancy is a child, highly delighted with every play-thing at firſt, but ſoon grows tired of it, and perpetually calls out for new ones; ſuch has been the ſtate of the arts amongſt us. The artiſts have been conſtantly employed in finding new gewgaws from each new generation, and the productions which were the admiration of one century, are ſcarce to be endured in another. In this reſpect our taſte for the arts exactly reſembles our taſte for dreſs. We laugh at the fantaſtical ornaments ſeen in the portraits of our forefathers, without ever reflecting that poſterity will do the ſame with regard to ours. Faſhion's magical wand makes whatever ſhe touches appear beautiful, but whenever ſhe removes it to a new object, all that ſhe had touched before appear in their native deformity. Let a gentleman or lady go to court, dreſſed exactly in the ſame cloaths, and with the ſame ornaments, which attracted the eyes and admi-

ration

ration of all ſpectators, only a few years ago, and they would now be pointed at with contempt, and become objects of deriſion.

Amongſt the Ancients the arts were regulated by principles founded on reaſon, wherever fitneſs and decorum were the objects; and upon the unerring feelings of the human heart, when the ſprings of the paſſions were to be touched. Fancy, amongſt them, was only employed as an handmaid to dreſs and adorn the arts, not as a miſtreſs, to form and regulate them. The conſequence of which was, that they were fixed and permanent. What was once eſteemed beautiful, was always eſteemed beautiful; and continues to be ſo to this day.

The ſame principle governed them in their dreſs too. They pitched upon two kinds, one for civil, the other for military life. In theſe convenience and ornament were equally conſulted, and the faſhion was never changed.

If the arts were eſtabliſhed amongſt us upon the ſame ſolid principles of reaſon and nature, as amongſt the Ancients; all the evil conſequences of a fluctuating and falſe taſte, as deſtructive to the vigour of the mind, as exceſs of ſenſual gratifications, is to the ſtrength of the body, would be avoided. And if we open the foundation of oratory, which was cloſed up by

barbariſm, the arts will once more neceſſarily flow from it in their natural channels.

This alone can put a ſtop to the devaſtations of increaſing luxury, by affording an opportunity to the rich of employing the redundance of their wealth, and ſuperfluity of time, in procuring to themſelves ſome of the moſt delightful of our mental enjoyments, inſtead of the corporeal, the ſenſual, the brutal. A juſt taſte for the polite arts, which would of courſe grow up with us, were they to be ſeen here in perfection, would prove our ſure Palladium againſt the aſſaults of vice; this the antidote againſt its poiſon; this the potent herb moli, againſt the charms and bewitching cup of Circe, which is to be obtained only from the God Mercury, from the God of Eloquence.

The admirable author of *Elements of Criticiſm*, has in his introduction to that excellent work, finely illuſtrated this poſition. Where he ſays, 'A juſt taſte in the fine arts, by ſweet-'ening and harmonizing the temper, is a ſtrong 'antidote to the turbulence of paſſion, and vio-'lence of purſuit. Elegance of taſte procures 'to a man ſo much enjoyment at home, or 'eaſily within reach, that in order to be occu-'pied, he is, in youth, under no temptation to 'precipitate into hunting, gambling, drinking; 'nor, in middle age, to deliver himſelf over

'to

'to ambition; nor, in old age, to avarice.
'Pride, a diſguſtful ſelfiſh paſſion, exerts itſelf
'without control, when accompanied with a
'bad taſte. A man of this ſtamp, upon whom
'the moſt ſtriking beauty makes but a faint
'impreſſion, feels no joy but in gratifying his
'ruling paſſion, by the diſcovery of errours and
'blemiſhes. Pride, on the other hand, finds
'in the conſtitution no enemy more formidable
'than a delicate and diſcerning taſte. The man
'upon whom nature and culture have beſtowed
'this bleſſing, feels great delight, in the virtu-
'ous diſpoſitions and actions of others. He
'loves to cheriſh them, and to publiſh them to
'the world. Faults and failings, it is true,
'are to him not leſs obvious: but theſe he
'avoids, or removes out of ſight, becauſe they
'give him pain. In a word, there may be other
'paſſions, which, for a ſeaſon, diſturb the peace
'of ſociety more than pride: but no other paſ-
'ſion is ſo unwearied an antagoniſt to the ſweets
'of ſocial intercourſe. Pride, tending aſſidu-
'ouſly to its own gratification, puts a man per-
'petually in oppoſition to others; and diſpoſes
'him more to reliſh bad than good qualities,
'even in a boſom friend. How different that
'diſpoſition of mind, where every virtue in a
'companion or neighbour, is, by refinement
'of taſte, ſet in its ſtrongeſt light; and defects

'or blemiſhes, natural to all, are ſuppreſſed, or 'kept out of view.

'In the next place, delicacy of taſte tends 'not leſs to invigorate the ſocial affections, than 'to moderate thoſe that are ſelfiſh. To be 'convinced of this tendency, we need only re-'flect that delicacy of taſte, neceſſarily height-'ens our ſenſibility of pain and pleaſure, and 'of courſe our ſympathy, which is the capital 'branch of every ſocial paſſion. Sympathy in 'particular, invites a communication of joys 'and ſorrows, hopes and fears. Such exer-'ciſe, ſoothing and ſatisfactory in itſelf, is ne-'ceſſarily productive of mutual good-will and 'affection.'

This reaſoning may to ſome appear too refined, yet nothing can be more juſt. But theſe happy effects can only flow from true taſte, and as taſte is generally conformable to the ſtate of the liberal arts in each country, wherever thoſe arts are not eſtabliſhed on true principles, true taſte will be rarely found. And I have ſhewn that thoſe arts cannot be eſtabliſhed on true principles, where the language of nature is not cultivated, and carried to perfection.

There has been ſome time ſince given to the world, an Eſtimate of the Manners of the Times, which have been referred by the author, to the principle of effeminacy. But it might

might as juſtly be aſſerted, that the Thames owes its plenty of water to ſome ſcanty ſtream that runs into it, as that the variety of corruptions, and depraved manners of the age, were owing to a principle, whoſe operations are confined to ſo narrow a ſphere. It is ſurpriſing, that the author ſhould not recollect, the true ſource pointed out every where through the whole Chriſtian diſpenſation of the chief virtues belonging to man, which is benevolence; ſtyled in the ſcripture-phraſe, charity: and conſequently, its oppoſite, ſelfiſhneſs, muſt be the ſource of our worſt vices. And ſhould a new eſtimate be made, he would find that all the vitiated manners of the times, which he has in vain endeavoured to derive from his ſcanty rill, effeminacy, naturally flow from the plenteous fountain of ſelfiſhneſs. The virtues and vices, in all ages and countries, have had their different degrees of aſcendency, in proportion as the one or the other of theſe principles, had the predominance. And indeed as all human virtues and vices, depend upon the proper diſcharge of our duties in ſociety, or the contrary, they can be referred to no other ſources.

Now nothing can contribute more to the propagation of ſelfiſhneſs in this country, than the aſcendency which the written language has obtained amongſt us, over that which is ſpoken.

In

In order to prove this, I muſt beg of the reader to recollect a propoſition ſufficiently made out in one of my lectures, 'That the mere language of ideas, whether written or ſpoken, can of itſelf contain no other power, but that of conveying knowledge, and improving the underſtanding: to touch the heart and agitate the fancy, it is requiſite that the language of emotions ſhould be joined with it.'

In all communications by the living voice, three different effects will be produced, according as the ſpeaker neglects to unite theſe two languages; or as he unites them unſkilfully and diſcordantly; or as he blends them in due proportion, ſo as to form harmony.

In the firſt caſe, no emotion can poſſibly be communicated by the ſpeaker; he who has no feelings in himſelf, nor makes uſe of any ſigns of feelings, can never work upon the ſenſibility of others. He may communicate knowledge, provided his hearers will be at the pains of commanding their own attention, in ſpite of a dull monotony, whoſe very nature it is, to deaden and diſſipate attention.

In the ſecond caſe, where the ſpeaker uſes the language of emotions unſkilfully and diſcordantly, he either becomes an object of diſguſt or ridicule to his hearers; who accordingly, either ever after avoid him, or if they are obliged

to

to attend, indulge themſelves in a malignant ſatisfaction, by laughing at his abſurdities.

In the laſt caſe (rarely, very rarely ſeen amongſt us!) where the ſpeaker blends the two languages properly, the fancy, the paſſions, the underſtanding are all pleaſingly agitated; each individual receives an additional delight; from the ſum communicated to the whole auditory, reflected from eye to eye, during a charmed attention to the orator; poured out from breaſt to breaſt, when his ſilence permits them to give way to the fulneſs of their hearts. Perhaps there is no other ſituation in which the ſocial diſpoſition of mankind is ſo exquiſitely gratified. They aſſemble at ſuch meetings with ſatisfaction in their looks, from expectation of the delight which they are to receive; they part with mutual congratulations, on account of mutual benefit, and entertainment. Such an intercourſe, frequently repeated, tends to eradicate all ſelfiſh paſſions, and to bring forward and invigorate all the fine emotions of benevolence, and the great duty of Chriſtian charity.

Of theſe three ways it is evident, that the firſt, is calculated to render us unſocial; the ſecond, diſſocial; and the third alone can tend to make us, what we were deſigned to be, ſocial beings.

In the laſt of theſe, thro' want of inſtruction, it is exceedingly difficult, to arrive at any degree of excellence, and therefore few make the attempt. Vanity, or enthuſiaſm, have wrought upon ſome to adopt the ſecond method, on which account they are as much deſpiſed and avoided, by men of ſenſe and taſte, as they are admired and followed by fools and fanatics. But the bulk of our public ſpeakers, hopeleſs of attaining the perfection neceſſary to the third method, and ſtudious to avoid the ill conſequences of the ſecond, of courſe fall into the firſt; in which by not pretending to any merit, they diſarm cenſure; and paſs thro' life contented without honour, if they eſcape diſgrace.

Such being the ſtate of public elocution, few people can reap either profit or pleaſure from it. Men therefore in general have recourſe to books, both for inſtruction and delight. This ſort of delight is in its nature a ſelfiſh one, as the exerciſe is performed alone, and the reader has no one to participate of his ſatisfaction. Nor can it ever contribute to render any one ſociable, unleſs he reads with a view to communicate to others in diſcourſe what knowledge he has acquired, and what emotions he has felt in reading books. Now there is no greater enemy to facility of utterance, than a habit of

ſilent

ſilent reading; on which account, bookiſh men, make in general the pooreſt figure in converſation.

But it may be ſaid, that tho' in the preſent ſtate of public elocution, the ſocial feelings are not exerciſed, and that ſilent reading contributes to weaken or deſtroy them, for want of communication, which alone can give them vigour and ſpirit, yet when men come to mix in the world, both in private and public companies, they will find in converſation, that this deficiency is amply made up: And that all the ſocial feelings, all the delicate ſenſibilities of our nature, will be regulated, and duly exerciſed, by keeping good company. Indeed if the uſual topics of converſation are of that nature, and if the world abounds in perſons, who deliver themſelves upon ſuch topics, with feeling and taſte, ſuch an effect might reaſonably be expected. But if we examine the general ſtate of converſation amongſt us, we ſhall find that it is rather calculated, like that of public elocution, to render us unſocial, or diſſocial, than ſocial beings.

The bulk of mankind may be divided into four claſſes. The firſt and moſt numerous conſiſts of the Inſipids; who having little knowledge, little feeling, and leſs power of communicating them, are ſure they can make no figure

figure in converſation; and in order to conceal their deficiency, hide themſelves in perpetual crowds. Theſe always wear the ſame countenance, have but one ſet of phraſes, which they adapt to all topics, and ſpeak in the bon ton, which is without any change of tone. They would not for the world diſcover any emotion, either in look, geſture, or voice; and by a conſtant habit of ſuppreſſing their ſigns, they at laſt overcome the emotions themſelves. Thus are they rendered unſocial, by ſociety. Amongſt this claſs is to be found what is commonly called, *the beſt company*, allowed to be the moſt ſelfiſh members of the community.

The ſecond claſs may be called the Diſputants; who having collected from books a heap of undigeſted knowledge, and a very aukward and inaccurate manner of ſetting it forth in diſcourſe, are engaged in endleſs controverſies and wrangles, maintained with great warmth and violence, to the no ſmall rouſing and invigorating of all the worſt paſſions of man, pride, envy, hatred, &c. and thus are theſe men rendered diſſocial by ſociety, and may juſtly be called bad company.

The third claſs, is of the Smarts, and the Wits; who have only ſuch a ſmattering of knowledge, as to look down with contempt on the Inſipids, and to make ſport of the Diſputants.

Their

Their favourite enjoyment is a perpetual ridicule of all that is ſerious and good; they attempt to laugh others, and really themſelves, out of all ſocial feelings; and ſeem to think riſibility, the true characteriſtic of man. Theſe are dreaded and avoided by the Inſipids; called bad company by the Diſputants; and reckoned *mighty good company* by fools, and themſelves.

The fourth claſs conſiſts of thoſe who give themſelves up to ſenſuality, voluptuouſneſs, and profligacy of all ſorts; who conſtantly acting againſt the principles upon which the nobleſt purpoſes of ſociety are founded, may be juſtly termed Antiſocialiſts, and called the worſt company in the world.

It is to be wiſhed that the number of thoſe, whoſe converſation can at once enlighten the underſtanding, delight the fancy, and make the heart diſtend with benevolent ſenſations, by means of a happy union of the two languages of art and nature, were ſo great, as to form a fifth claſs; but rarely are ſuch men to be found; and more rarely have they an opportunity of exerting their talents, in the diſſonance of mixed company, not tuned to their pitch. Happy the man, who can find ſuch a one to be the choſen companion of his private hours! or who can now and then pick out a ſelect ſet, to participate of the ſatisfaction, which ſuch a

one

one is capable of diffuſing thro' perſons of nice ſenſibility, and juſt taſte.

It cannot be denied that the improvement of converſation, would greatly contribute to improve our manners, and to make us take delight in ſociety. The way to improve converſation, is to make that a chief object of attention, in the education of our youth, by inſtructing them in all the points eſſential to it, inſtead of leaving it, as we do now, to chance. To attend to their delivery from their firſt efforts to articulate, to the utmoſt perfection of a refined elocution. To make them ſtudy the preciſe meaning, of all the words and phraſes in their native tongue. By conſtant practice both in reciting the beſt works, and their own extemporaneous comments upon them, to give them a facility, and elegance of expreſſion. All this will be done of courſe, if we will make the living language, as it ought to be, our firſt object of attention; and conſider the written one, as it ſhould be, only in a ſecondary light. This would be the moſt effectual way to check the force of that ſordid principle, ſelfiſhneſs, the nouriſher of every vice; and to give vigour to that noble one of benevolence, the ſource of every Chriſtian virtue.

Upon the whole, if what I have advanced upon this ſubject be well founded, it will follow,

low, that the people of thoſe countries, where the greateſt pains were taken to refine and cultivate their ſpeech, and where the ſtudy and practice of oratory were moſt general, approached the neareſt to the perfection of human nature. But does hiſtory warrant the truth of this? Let us try. What nations were they who applied themſelves to thoſe ſtudies, and to the exerciſe of that art? We know but of two; the Greeks and Romans. Do not their very names flaſh conviction on us? Need there be more ſaid to prove the point? Are not theſe the nations allowed by the univerſal voice of mankind, to have excelled all others, and to have brought human nature to a degree of perfection, that none before them ever reached; none ſince have arrived at, even with the aſſiſtance of their admirable precepts, and bright patterns, together with many glorious advantages and lights which they wanted? Were not theſe the only nations who were maſters of the oratorial art? Will not this ſatisfy us? Do we want farther proof, that it was to that art they were indebted, for their pre-eminence over the reſt of the world? Let us examine at what period of time it was, that the Greeks ſhone forth in all that blaze of glory; we ſhall find, it was, when oratory reached its meridian. Amongſt what particular people of Greece, did the

grand conſtellation of human excellencies ariſe, whoſe number and luſtre have not been equalled ſince ſun and moon were made? Amongſt the Athenians, where oratory reached its higheſt pitch. When did the æra of the Roman glory commence? Not till after the art of oratory had been cultivated. When was it that her cluſter of extraordinary geniuſes adorned her hemiſphere? Not till after oratory had reached its meridian. In both nations when did this ſplendor vaniſh? When the ſun of oratory was ſet.

Is there any doubt yet remaining? Will not the reaſon and nature of things, corroborated by the ſtrongeſt facts, overthrow prejudice? Shall we not believe in the amazing powers of eloquence, the accounts of which are ſo ſtrongly authenticated, unleſs ſhe ſhould preſent herſelf to our ſenſes, in all the charms wherewith ſhe was once adorned, and thro' them force conviction on our minds? It is to be feared a proof of this kind, is not to be expected by us, in our preſent ſtate; much time, much labour did it coſt the Ancients, before they brought that art to perfection; much time, much labour muſt it coſt the Moderns, before they can rival them in that point. Yet ſurely from circumſtances, and the nature of things, we may form a juſt idea of the charms and

power

power of oratory, without having them exemplified in a living inſtance. Imagine to yourſelves a Demoſthenes addreſſing the moſt illuſtrious aſſembly in the world, upon a point whereon the fate of the moſt illuſtrious of nations depended. How awful ſuch a meeting! how vaſt the ſubject! Is man poſſeſſed of talents adequate to the great occaſion? Adequate! yes, ſuperior. By the power of his eloquence, the auguſtneſs of the aſſembly is loſt, in the dignity of the orator; and the importance of the ſubject, for a while ſuſpended, by the admiration of his talents. With what ſtrength of argument, with what power of fancy, with what emotions of the heart, does he aſſault and ſubjugate the whole man, and at once captivate his reaſon, his imagination, and his paſſions. To effect this muſt be the utmoſt effort, of the moſt improved ſtate of human nature. Not a faculty that he poſſeſſes, is here unemployed; not a faculty that he poſſeſſes, but is here exerted to its higheſt pitch. All his internal powers are at work; all his external teſtify their energies. Within, the memory, the fancy, the judgment, the paſſions are all buſy; without, every muſcle, every nerve is exerted; not a feature, not a limb, but ſpeaks. The organs of the body, attuned to the energies of the mind, thro' the kindred organs of the hearers, inſtantaneouſly, and as it were with an elec-

trical ſpirit, vibrate thoſe energies from ſoul to ſoul! Notwithſtanding the diverſity of minds in ſuch a multitude, by the lightning of eloquence, they are melted into one maſs; the whole aſſembly actuated in one and the ſame way, become as it were one man, have but one voice.

Here only it is that the admirable mechaniſm of the human frame, ſo far as it regards an union with an intellectual mind, and ſo far as it is fitted to diſplay the hidden powers of the intellect to view, can be perceived: here and here only it is that the perfection of human nature ariſing from ſuch an union of ſoul and body, can be manifeſted. In theſe exertions, the divine part of us, becomes as it were an object of the ſenſes; it is to be ſeen, to be heard; it lightened in the eye of a Pericles, it thundered from his voice. If any one doubts of the truth of this poſition, let him conſider whether there is any other ſituation of life, any other profeſſion or art, in which it is poſſible for man, at once to diſplay, all the force, of all his faculties, both of body and mind? If there be not, the point muſt be granted. Compare Xerxes on his throne; Philip in the battle of Chæronea; Archimedes in his cloſet; or Virgil in his ſtudy; with Demoſthenes, rouſing the Greeks to the preſervation of their liberties;—

berties;—How do the king, the general, the philoſopher, and the poet, ſink below the orator!

What a magnificent idea, and yet how ſtrictly juſt, has the enthuſiaſtic ſpirit of Milton preſented us, of the power of the ancient orators, in the few following admirable lines; when ſpeaking of thoſe of Athens he ſays,

> Thoſe ancient, whoſe reſiſtleſs eloquence
> Wielded at will that fierce Democratie;
> Shook the arſenal; and fulmin'd over Greece,
> To Macedon, and Artaxerxes' throne.

Tho' the force of eloquence, even in theſe times, cannot be denied, from its manifeſt effects, wherever it breaks forth by means of an uncommon genius, and extraordinary application, yet the Moderns ſay, that they cannot give credit to the wonders told of it in ancient times, with regard to the ſuperlative delight attending it, which allured ſuch numbers to the ſtudy of the art, and attracted ſuch multitudes to hear thoſe who were maſters of it. They will not eaſily believe, from their view of it in its preſent uncultivated ſtate, that it could ſum up in itſelf, all the pleaſures which reſulted from the moſt refined arts, and rival each of them in thoſe qualities which ſeemed peculiar to each. They cannot conceive that it ſhould be as charming to the ear as the moſt melodious ſong; that it ſhould warm the imagination

as much as the moſt animated poem; or rouſe the paſſions to an equal degree with the glowing ſcenes of a well-acted tragedy. And yet this was allowed univerſally to be the caſe both at Athens and Rome. It is thus that Cicero ſpeaks of this noble art. 'Nam ut uſum dicendi omittam, qui in omni pacata et libera civitate dominatur, tanta oblectatio eſt in ipſa facultate dicendi, ut nihil hominum aut auribus, aut mentibus, jucundius percipi poſſit. Qui enim cantus, moderatæ orationis pronunciatione, dulcior inveniri poteſt? Quod carmen, artificioſa verborum concluſione, aptius? Quis actor, in imitanda, quam orator, in ſuſcipienda veritate jucundior?"

If from our own experience we are ſlow of belief with regard to theſe articles, let us reflect, what incompetent judges we muſt be, of an art which we have utterly neglected, and which of all others, requires moſt pains to bring it to perfection. Let us not pretend to decide againſt the authority of undoubted judges, with regard to the magic charms of elocution, in countries where nothing appertaining to it was left to chance. The ſtructure of their words, their poſition in ſentences, all the tones of the paſſions, and fancy, thoſe belonging to the ſeveral ſtops and pauſes; were ſettled amongſt them according to a muſical ſcale, and

and delivered in proportions equally exact; and to theſe, all the accompaniments of geſture, correſponded in juſt time. The candid and judicious amongſt us, will readily form an eſtimate, of the degree of pleaſure which muſt have been communicated, by ſpeech ſo harmonized; when they reflect on the delight, which even in our irregular ſtate, they receive from hearing any diſcourſe delivered in a better manner than ordinary, by perſons whoſe natural talents in that way give them a comparative excellence. How much more exquiſite muſt it have been, when all the moſt charming delicacies of art, were ſuperadded to the ſtrongeſt powers of nature?

The queſtion now to be decided is, whether there be any inſurmountable obſtacle in our way, which, were we to apply ourſelves to the cultivation of that art, would prevent our making ſo a great progreſs in it, or carrying it to ſuch a pitch of perfection, as the Ancients did. With regard to the organs of ſpeech and hearing, there can be no doubt that ours are exactly conſtructed in the ſame manner, and come from the hand of nature in an equal degree of perfection. This is ſufficiently proved by the delicacy of ear, and harmony of voice, to be found in many who apply themſelves to the knowledge and practice of vocal muſic. The

only article then, in which we can poſſibly differ, muſt be that of language. Much indeed depends upon the ſtate of that important article. Language is to knowledge, what body is to ſoul; much therefore muſt indeed depend upon its ſtructure. The body is admirably contrived to anſwer all the purpoſes of the ſoul in this world; it is the work of an omniſcient Maker, and therefore perfect. But language, the body of thought, is in a great meaſure the workmanſhip of man, and therefore imperfect. Yet amazing has been the difference in the artful mechaniſm, and beautiful form of theſe bodies of thought, in different nations, according to the different degrees of genius, ſkill, and application, in thoſe who formed and poliſhed them. If a national language be in itſelf poor, barbarous, or diſcordant, all attempts towards harmonious compoſition, or refined ſpeaking in ſuch a tongue, muſt prove fruitleſs. Demoſthenes could never have made ſuch orations, or produced ſuch effects from them, had his native language been High Dutch. Muſic can never make any great progreſs in a country where no inſtrument is known but the bagpipe; nor elocution where the tongue is barbarous. Language, being the great inſtrument of elocution, if it be not of a good ſound and large compaſs, will never ſuffer that art to give much delight,

delight, nor conſequently to make any great progreſs. But tho' a nation ſhould be in poſſeſſion of an inſtrument, in its conſtruction perfectly fitted to ſhew all the force of harmony; if they never enquire into its powers, nor try what compaſs it has; if they take no pains to put it in tune; if they learn not the rules of muſic, nor are acquainted with the notes; they will not be in a much better ſituation than thoſe who are confined to the pooreſt. Some indeed may learn a few tunes by ear, but the generality will produce nothing but diſcord, like thoſe who touch the keys of an harpſichord at random.

That ſuch is our caſe, that we are in poſſeſſion of a language in its own nature capable of the utmoſt expreſſion and harmony, and that with proper pains and culture, it might rival or even excel the noble languages of Greece and Rome, I hope to be able in the next courſe of lectures, to prove in ſome reſpects, and to make it highly probable in others.

HEADS

HEADS OF A PLAN

FOR THE

IMPROVEMENT

OF

ELOCUTION;

AND FOR

PROMOTING THE STUDY

OF THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE;

IN ORDER TO THE

REFINING, ASCERTAINING,

AND REDUCING IT TO A

STANDARD:

Together with ſome ARGUMENTS, to enforce the NECESSITY of carrying ſuch a PLAN into Execution.

HEADS OF A PLAN

FOR THE

IMPROVEMENT OF

ELOCUTION, &c.

SINCE the time that Mr. SHERIDAN delivered his firſt Courſe of Lectures, he has been repeatedly ſolicited by many perſons of the moſt diſtinguiſhed abilities, to draw up a regular plan, for the introduction and eſtabliſhment of the Art of Elocution, and the grammatical ſtudy of the Engliſh language, as points which would contribute much to the improvement of education, and conſequently to the benefit of theſe realms.

But he owns, whatever inclination he may have to obey their commands, the undertaking appears to him to be too arduous, and far beyond his ſtrength. To digeſt ſo important a plan would require much time and thought, as well as much greater talents than he can boaſt. Or could vanity even ſuggeſt to him that he is

equal

equal to the point, there are many weighty reaſons for his declining it. An attempt to ſettle an affair of ſuch national concern would, in any private perſon, be too invidious a taſk, and might expoſe him to much cenſure. A plan of that ſort ſhould be the joint product of ſome of the ableſt heads, whoſe characters might give ſuch an authority, and whoſe power might give ſuch a ſanction to what they propoſed, as to abaſh prejudice, ſilence envy, and diſarm ridicule.

But that he may ſhew his readineſs to obey the commands of ſuch reſpectable perſonages, as far as lies in his power, he will endeavour to throw together ſome looſe thoughts on the ſubject, in order that they may undergo the examination of men of judgment and experience, and that a regular plan may be drawn up under the direction of ſuch men of genius and abilities, as ſhall be inclined to give their aſſiſtance on this occaſion.

It has been a point diſputed in what place theſe ſtudies ought to commence; though moſt are agreed, that they cannot be too early inculcated, and that children ought to be trained in them from the very firſt rudiments, when the pliant organs are eaſily formed to the pronunciation of any ſounds; and before prejudice, or evil habits ſhall have taken root.

It is certain, that the principles of elocution, and the rules of Engliſh Grammar cannot be too ſoon inſtilled. But this can be effected only by a ſufficient number of ſkilful maſters, and a well-digeſted ſyſtem of rules, neither of which are at preſent ready to our hands.

The firſt neceſſary ſtep, therefore, will be to find out a method whereby a ſufficient number of ſkilful maſters may be procured to teach Engliſh, and the art of ſpeaking, by one uniform ſyſtem of well-digeſted rules.

The moſt ſpeedy and effectual way to accompliſh this point will be the eſtabliſhment of theſe ſtudies at the two Univerſities; as in thoſe will be found collected all ſuch as are hereafter to be maſters of ſchools, who by learning the Engliſh grammar themſelves, and the art of ſpeaking, by one uniform ſyſtem of rules, will of courſe afterwards be enabled to teach them in the ſame way throughout the kingdom.

When a grammatical knowledge of our mother tongue, and a critical ſkill therein, together with the art of reading it with propriety, and reciting it publicly with judgment and grace, ſhall become part of a collegiate courſe, and confer honour and reputation on ſuch young gentlemen as may diſtinguiſh themſelves in that way, it muſt alſo become an object of

ſerious

ſerious attention to all School-maſters, that their pupils may not go to the Univerſities unprepared in ſuch material articles.

Such maſters therefore as are at preſent too old to learn, or to alter their own confirmed habits; or ſuch as have not talents to inſtruct their ſcholars in the art of elocution, or to afford in themſelves patterns for imitation, will be obliged to take uſhers from the Univerſities, as ſoon as they can be procured, who may be properly qualified to give inſtruction in thoſe branches. And parents, when they come to ſee the great uſe and neceſſity of theſe additional ſtudies; will not demur againſt paying an additional price to the maſters, in order to enable them to make it worth the while of ſuch uſhers, to take the extraordinary pains, which an inſtitution of this nature will require.

Or in ſchools where the uſhers are fixed and properly qualified to teach what is now their chief province, the dead languages only, as it might be thought an act of cruelty to remove them on account of their deficiency in theſe new points, in this caſe maſters of Engliſh may be allowed to teach the boys privately at their leiſure hours; and in a ſhort time there will be few parents who will not think the gratuity to them better beſtowed, than to the maſters of French, dancing, or fencing. Nor

ſhould the maſter of Engliſh, and the art of ſpeaking, be rated lower than any of thoſe, in point of ſalary, and the ſtipend which he will receive in that caſe, will afford an income ſufficient to induce men liberally educated, to make it their profeſſion.

When theſe ſtudies are once eſtabliſhed in the Univerſities, and afterwards in the Grammar ſchools, it will then become neceſſary for thoſe who profeſs to teach Engliſh, and prepare boys for the Latin ſchool, to alter their method, and to go regularly to work; not only by teaching them their native tongue grammatically, but alſo by grounding them well in the rudiments of elocution, in a juſt manner of reading aloud, and a well-modulated delivery; nor will any parents, I preſume, ever ſuffer their children to be vitiated in the firſt principles of elocution, by the moſt ignorant of men, when ſkilful maſters are to be procured.

Thus by beginning at the Univerſity, we begin as it were at the ſource, the vital ſeat of motion, which like the heart impels the life-blood to the extremities of the frame, and by a due circulation receives it again to enable it to continue its functions.

But there is another ſtill more cogent reaſon for eſtabliſhing theſe ſtudies firſt at the Univerſity, which is, that the preſent riſing race there may reap the benefit of inſtruction, and

not be ſuffered, like their predeceſſors, to paſs into life, and to enter upon buſineſs, utterly ignorant of thoſe points, where the opportunities of redeeming loſt time may not eaſily offer. It will be ſaid, that it would have been better if theſe ſtudies had commenced earlier in life, and that it will be difficult to root out confirmed bad habits of pronunciation, and delivery. There is no contradicting this truth; the earlier boys are taken in hand, the better; but becauſe the beſt cannot be done, Is, therefore, nothing to be done? It is true, it will require more pains, both in the inſtructor and the pupil, to ſubdue bad habits; but if they are to be ſubdued, is it not better to take thoſe pains, than to ſuffer thoſe bad habits to continue through life? There would be few inſtances found of perſons at that time of life who might not be cured of groſs faults, and errours; and with regard to ſuch as have talents for elocution, tho' they may not arrive at the preciſe degree of excellence, which might have been expected had they been trained regularly from the beginning, yet can ſuch difference be a matter of but little moment, as it can never be perceived by the world: for the advantage which even this late ſtudy and practice will give them over their predeceſſors, who never took any pains, will make their comparative

parative excellence, in the eyes of mankind, ſeem as abſolute.

Suppoſing, therefore, that on theſe accounts the Univerſity ſhould be allowed to be the proper place where ſuch an eſtabliſhment ſhould be founded, the next point to be conſidered is how it is to be ſupported, and by what means a fund may be raiſed for the purpoſe.

When we look into the hiſtory of moſt endowments, we ſhall find that they were chiefly bequeſts of particular men, in the days when it was the faſhion to think, that legacies left to charitable and public uſes, were a ſure means of ſaving the ſoul. Of late, as that opinion has loſt ground, there have been fewer inſtances of benefactions in that way; and as it has been thought, that every thing neceſſary to education, has been long ſince provided for in the Univerſities, new endowments there have been deemed ſuperfluous.

We have indeed lately an inſtance of a new one, and of a moſt uſeful kind, in Mr. Viner's benefaction, for the ſupport of lectures in the common law.

There is alſo another ſhortly to take place, ariſing from the Clarendon benefaction, for introducing the bodily exerciſes of riding the great horſe, fencing, &c. as taught in foreign Academies.

The late Sir James Lowther, as I was informed by the learned head of Peter-Houſe at Cambridge, had left in one of his wills, a conſiderable legacy to the Univerſity of Oxford, for the endowment of lectureſhips on the Engliſh language, and the art of elocution, though it was omitted in his laſt teſtament, for what reaſon is not known.

But as a reliance on endowments from particular men is at beſt precarious, and may never take place, ſome more certain and ſpeedy method of eſtabliſhing theſe ſtudies ought to be found.

Nor ſhall we have far to ſeek for ſuch a method, as we need only fall in with a new mode introduced into this country of promoting public good, by the inſtitution of ſocieties for encouraging ſuch arts, ſciences, manufactures, and ſtudies as are moſt wanting.

This practice, which was firſt begun in Ireland, was ſoon adopted by the ſharp-ſighted people of Scotland, in both which kingdoms moſt excellent effects have been produced from it; and though it is in a manner in its infancy here, yet ſome good has already proceeded from it, and much more may reaſonably be expected.

This practice ſeems of all others to be beſt ſuited to the conſtitution and genius of the people of this country.

Our

Our limited monarchs have it not in their power, were it ever ſo much in their inclination, to diffuſe bleſſing through the nation, in the ſame manner as in other countries, where the will of the ſovereign is the law.

From the nature of our complicated government, the beſt miniſtry will find ſufficient employment to preſerve the conſtitution, to keep things from growing worſe, and to ſave the ſtate from deſtruction, without entering into long details of ſchemes that may contribute to the flouriſhing condition of the community. Beſides, power changes hands ſo quickly, and a miniſter is often ſo ſhort-lived, that his chief attention muſt be taken up about what is neceſſary to be done, rather than about what is uſeful; and as the duration of his authority is ſo precarious, he can have but little encouragement to purſue any plan which may require not only much pains, but length of time to bring it to maturity.

Little is now to be hoped from public encouragement in this country, becauſe the public is poor, loaded with debt, and put to difficulties to ſupport itſelf; but much ought to be expected from private encouragement to all new and uſeful undertakings, becauſe individuals are rich, and can with eaſe ſpare ſomething to their ſupport: And ſurely nothing can

be more equitable than that where numbers are to be benefited by any plan, numbers ſhould contribute to the execution and ſupport of it.

Upon examination it would probably appear, that there could be no plan offered to the public, in the ſucceſs of which, ſo many Britiſh ſubjects are ſo nearly and deeply intereſted, as the one now treated of for the improvement of elocution, and for promoting the ſtudy of the Engliſh language; and conſequently there can be none ſo likely to induce numbers to form themſelves into a ſociety for that purpoſe.

Suppoſing therefore ſuch a ſociety were eſtabliſhed, conſiſting of a ſufficient number of men of rank, fortune, and abilities, determined to give all due aſſiſtance to the undertaking; the next article to be conſidered is, in what way they ſhould proceed, and what method they ſhould purſue towards accompliſhing the ends for which they were aſſociated.

This is a matter which cannot be adjuſted but by themſelves, and muſt be the reſult of their deliberations at their ſeveral meetings: and indeed it would be highly preſumptuous in any one to dictate to ſuch a body, or to attempt to point out the exact path in which they are to walk.

Yet

Yet it may not be amiſs to offer a few hints upon this head, if they ſhould only ſerve to furniſh matter for others to work upon, and mould into a better form.

If the ſociety ſhould be of opinion for the reaſons before mentioned, that theſe ſtudies ſhould take their riſe at the Univerſity, the firſt neceſſary ſtep will be to uſe the ſpeedieſt means of procuring a ſufficient number of perſons, properly qualified for the office of inſtructors.

As it is probable from the general neglect of theſe points, that there would be few, if any found at this day, fit to undertake ſuch a charge, ſufficient encouragement ſhould be given to young men poſſeſſed of talents in that way, to apply themſelves cloſely to the ſtudy and practice of thoſe articles, in order to qualify themſelves for the office of preceptors.

For this purpoſe certain annual ſalaries, for ſuch a term of years as ſhall be thought proper, ſhould be given to ſuch men as ſhall be deemed qualified for the employment, by the ſociety, or by ſuch judges as they ſhall appoint to examine into their reſpective merits.

A certain income would be a ſtrong inducement to many young men of talents, whoſe proſpects in life may not be conſiderable, to ſtrike into that courſe; though they would not venture to quit the beaten path upon precari-

ous proſpects only, or the chance of what gratuity they might receive from pupils. Yet it may not be found neceſſary in the event, that theſe ſalaries ſhould be perpetual, but only for a certain term of years, as before mentioned, till theſe ſtudies ſhall have gained a ſolid eſtabliſhment, and become general; for in that caſe inſtructors will obtain a ſufficient income from their pupils, as other maſters do; and the whole, or part of thoſe ſalaries, at the pleaſure of the ſociety, may revert to the fund for other purpoſes.

When the Univerſities ſhall have been ſupplied with a ſufficient number of inſtructors in this way, the next object will be to ſpread theſe ſtudies as ſpeedily as poſſible through the realm, by planting able maſters in the ſeveral counties, and principal towns of Great Britain; who ſhould in like manner have fixed and ſtated ſalaries for a certain term, which may ariſe partly from the fund belonging to the ſociety, and partly from the contributions of the principal inhabitants belonging to thoſe counties and great towns. It is to be ſuppoſed that few parents will heſitate to throw in their mite on this occaſion, in order to have their children taught juſt pronunciation, and purity of phraſe in diſcourſe; and that they may avoid provincial dialects, accents, and phraſeology, which prevail

vail more or leſs thro' all the counties of Great Britain; and which, thro' want of proper care in early years, are neceſſarily caught, in ſome degree, by all who are trained in thoſe counties, and generally ſtick to them during the remainder of their lives.

Nor would it be in the leaſt irrational to expect, that as the utility of this meaſure would be daily more and more perceived from its fruits, there ſhould ariſe ſeveral ſmaller ſocieties in the different counties of the kingdom, to correſpond and co-operate with the great ſociety in the capital, in order to promote ſo uſeful an inſtitution, and render it as univerſal as poſſible.

When the firſt eſſential point is provided for, that of giving ſufficient encouragement to maſters, the next care ſhould be to ſtimulate pupils alſo to apply themſelves cloſely to theſe ſtudies, by conferring ſuitable rewards on ſuch as ſhould diſtinguiſh themſelves by public exhibitions of their ſuperiority in thoſe articles. For this purpoſe there might be ſtated days appointed, four times a year, or once in each term at the Univerſities, when all ſuch as were inclined to enter the liſts might have an opportunity of delivering an Engliſh ſpeech in the theatre or ſenate-houſe; and ſuch as were moſt approved of ſhould be entitled to rewards in proportion

proportion to their ſeveral degrees of merit. Theſe rewards might be either gold medals, or ſuch external ornaments as ſhould be deemed moſt proper by the ruling part of the Univerſity: to be adjudged by the Vice Chancellor, heads of houſes, and ſuch others as they might think fit to aſſociate with them.

Many other methods of encouragement will, no doubt, be ſuggeſted to the ſociety in the courſe of their enquiries; theſe are only hinted at, as ſeeming to be the moſt material during the infancy of the deſign.

Premiums alſo may be diſtributed quarterly at the ſchools, on ſtated days, in the ſame manner as at the Univerſities. The neglect of rewards, and the reliance on puniſhments alone, in a courſe of education which is to fit boys to become uſeful members of a free ſtate, has been a fatal overſight. Puniſhments may reſtrain from evil; reward alone can excite to good. Fear may debaſe, but never can ennoble the mind. The beſt effect to be hoped from that principle is mediocrity; but it is from emulation alone that excellence is to be expected. It is that generous principle only which is poſſeſſed of ſufficient energy to rouſe and ſtimulate the young ingenuous minds, to put forth all their ſtrength, and exert every faculty

culty to outſtrip their equals in the tough race of honour.

To point out diſtinctly the many excellent conſequences which might flow from the eſtabliſhment of ſuch a ſociety, would require a volume; but ſurely there is no one who has the leaſt degree of public ſpirit, or a due regard to his own intereſt, that would not ſolicit to be a member of it, and promote the end of their inſtitution, if he were convinced that the following good effects might reaſonably be expected from their endeavours.

I. The eſtabliſhment of an uniformity of pronunciation throughout all his Majeſty's Britiſh dominions.

II. The facilitating the acquirement of a juſt, proper delivery, to ſuch as ſhall apply to it; and the enabling all ſuch as are to ſpeak in public, to deliver their ſentiments with due grace and force, in proportion to their talents for elocution.

Laſtly, the refining, aſcertaining, and eſtabliſhing the Engliſh language on a durable baſis.

Now I ſhall endeavour, in as conciſe a manner as I can, to ſhew how theſe three deſirable points may be accompliſhed by the attention, care, and encouragement of ſuch a ſociety as is propoſed.

As

As to the firſt article, it cannot be denied that an uniformity of pronunciation throughout Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, as well as through the ſeveral counties of England, would be a point much to be wiſhed; as it might in a great meaſure contribute to deſtroy thoſe odious diſtinctions between ſubjects of the ſame king, and members of the ſame community, which are ever attended with ill conſequences, and which are chiefly kept alive by difference of pronunciation, and dialects; for theſe in a manner proclaim the place of a man's birth, whenever he ſpeaks, which otherwiſe could not be known by any other marks in mixed ſocieties.

This may be thought an impracticable point, as never having been accompliſhed either in ancient or modern times, even amongſt nations who have taken moſt pains to aſcertain their ſpeech, and to cultivate the art of delivery.

It will be ſaid that amongſt the Ancients, uniformity and purity of pronunciation, were to be found only within the walls of Athens and Rome, but extended not to the colonies; and that amongſt the Moderns, they are confined to a few cities of France and Italy, notwithſtanding the vaſt pains taken with their ſeveral languages, and the eaſe with which inſtruction may be had in their true pronunciation.

But

But England has ſome advantages over other nations, both ancient and modern, which would inſure us ſucceſs if the attempt were once made, and vigorous meaſures taken to ſupport it. There are two articles which have given us great advantage over the Ancients with regard to the point we are ſpeaking of; I mean the Preſs, and the Service of the Church. By means of theſe, an uniformity of pronunciation might with eaſe be diffuſed through the whole land. For want of the art of printing, the ancient Greeks and Romans could not propagate their languages far by means of books; for as manuſcripts were dear, few could afford to purchaſe them, and therefore few learned to read. Knowledge to the bulk of the people was conveyed through the ear, and this of courſe made them more attentive to the ſound and pronunciation of words. As both at Athens and Rome the number of orators, public ſpeakers, and philoſophers who taught *viva voce* without the aſſiſtance of books was very great; and as theſe were all regularly trained to pronounce their native language exactly in the ſame manner, a public general ſtandard of pronunciation was fixed, and open to all the inhabitants of Athens and Rome; and the people who were trained, and lived in thoſe cities, acquired from the prevalence of good example

the right and juſt manner of pronouncing their words; in the ſame way as people amongſt us, of different ſhires and counties, naturally contract a bad one, from the prevalence of bad example. But at a diſtance from the capital, and in the ſeveral colonies, as there was little or no public ſpeaking, ſo was there no ſtandard to be referred to, no motive for taking pains to preſerve exactneſs and purity of pronunciation, and conſequently it was left wholly to chance and caprice, as amongſt us.

But as by means of the preſs all ranks of people are taught to read, throughout the moſt diſtant parts of theſe countries, nothing can be more clear, than that if the maſters who teach Engliſh were qualified for the office, if they were themſelves inſtructed by one uniform ſyſtem of rules, and agreed exactly in the ſame manner of pronouncing their native tongue, they might in a great meaſure ſpread that pronunciation univerſally through the kingdom. And when the youth ſhall have been thus prepared, and trained in the right way, in order to preſerve them in it, we might have a ſtandard of ſo general and public a nature, in the pulpit, and ſuch patterns and models for imitation might be afforded in our clergy, as no other nation could boaſt. It is plain that both the ſtandard and influence of example from public

public ſpeakers amongſt the Ancients were confined to the capital, which would not be the caſe amongſt us, if the ſtandard of ſpeech was affixed to the pulpit. Nor could any of the more poliſhed modern nations vie with us in that point; as none of them have like us a ſettled regular Divine Service, and the Bible read conſtantly in the vulgar tongue in places of public worſhip.

As it muſt be allowed that a ſtandard of pronunciation ought to be fixed ſomewhere, ſo common ſenſe will tell us that it ought to be fixed there where it is likely to be moſt conſtant, permanent, and univerſal. Now it is evident, that in all theſe articles no place can be put in competition with the church: In point of conſtancy, there is a ſettled ſervice daily or weekly performed there; in point of permanence, this ſervice is likely to laſt as long as our conſtitution; and in point of univerſality, it is ſpread throughout his majeſty's Britiſh dominions. How confined, with reſpect to that, muſt any ſtandard be which ſhould be fixed to the court, the ſenate-houſe, or the bar; and how few of his majeſty's ſubjects, in compariſon, would have an opportunity of referring to it in any of thoſe places, or of being benefited by it?

Indeed were the clergy but uniform in their pronunciation, they muſt neceſſarily become the

the ſtandard: For beſides that no other order of men could have any right to diſpute their claim to it, as it muſt be allowed, that purity and propriety of delivery ought in a more eſpecial manner to be ſought after, by ſuch as are employed in the ſacred office, no other rank of men could have ſuch opportunities of ſupporting their claim, and carrying it into effect by the general influence of their example. To hear them, is not only in the power of all claſſes of men, but is alſo part of their duty. And were the clergy but maſters of the powers of elocution, it would likewiſe be the inclination of all claſſes of men to hear them; and then all men would through choice make them their patterns.

Uniformity and exactneſs of pronunciation in that order, would certainly have the ſame effects that were produced by the public ſpeakers of Athens and Rome, and diffuſe them generally through the people; eſpecially if at the ſame time we make uſe of the advantage which the Preſs has given us, by having all children taught well, inſtead of being ill taught to read. In that caſe ſuch conſtant patterns as they would have before them, would prevent their relapſing into faults, committed by people more advanced in life, who had not the good fortune to reap the benefit of ſuch inſtruction in their youth,

youth, and who might not eaſily change bad habits, which had been contracted in their early years.

This uniformity in all the riſing generation of the clergy will of courſe be obtained, if theſe ſtudies ſhould be immediately eſtabliſhed at the univerſities; and with reſpect to the preſent race of the younger clergy (or ſuch others as ſhall not think themſelves too old to learn) they may eaſily be brought to read the ſettled ſervice uniformly, as a month's application, under proper inſtructors, would be found ſufficient for that purpoſe.

An uniformity amongſt thoſe who regularly apply to the acquiſition of this important branch of their office, will ſoon bring a neceſſity on the reſt to apply alſo; as otherwiſe they will be diſgraced by the compariſon, and it will be ſcandalous to be any longer deficient in ſo obvious a point, when they ſhall have the means in their power of being ſet right. At preſent indeed when there is no ſtandard, no uniformity, no inſtruction; every one without fear or diſgrace perſeveres in the manner which chance and bad habit have given him. He knows not how to help it. He is not aſhamed—*Defendit numerus.*

With regard to the ſecond article, that of rendering the acquirement of a juſt, forcible,

and graceful delivery eaſy to ſuch as ſhall apply to it, &c. though it be generally allowed to be a moſt deſirable object, yet few think it a point that can be compaſſed. Many will not allow that elocution either is, or can be taught as an art. That it was ſo, and the moſt favourite art amongſt the Greeks and Romans, cannot be denied. What *has* been, *may* be. But to thoſe who ſay that becauſe it never has been taught or practiſed as ſuch amongſt us, therefore it never can be, I ſhall not attempt an anſwer.

I ſhall only aſk thoſe gentlemen whether pains and labour will not be the beſt means of acquiring ſkill; and whether ſkill and practice will not afford the beſt means of correcting errours, ſupplying defects, and improving good natural talents in ſpeaking, as they do in every thing elſe? The attempt is worth making, it may be productive of much good, it cannot do harm. If we try we may accompliſh the point; if we ſit ſtill, things muſt remain in the ſame ſtate.

With regard to the third and laſt article, the refining, aſcertaining, and eſtabliſhing our language on a durable baſis, it is very clear that this muſt be the work of care and pains, and not of chance. And that the only means by which theſe deſirable ends can be attained in ſuch a conſtitution as ours, muſt be the introducing

ducing the regular ſtudy of it, and making it a neceſſary part of education, has been amply proved in the ſecond book of an eſſay entitled Britiſh Education; the author of which is the more emboldened to make this aſſertion, as his arguments on that head have been examined, and allowed to be concluſive, by men remarkable for penetration and ſolidity.

No one will ſay but that it is a thing much to be wiſhed that an accurate knowledge of Engliſh, with regard to the preciſe meaning of words, were more eaſily attainable, and more generally diffuſed through the natives of this country; as alſo a greater command of them ſo as to give a facility in the choice, and a correct fluency of ſpeech. The firſt of theſe articles can be attained only by regular ſtudy, and the laſt by conſtant practice.

That it is by regular ſtudy only that we acquire knowledge of the dead languages, and chiefly alſo of foreign tongues, muſt be allowed; and there are few of tolerable capacity, who with due application, and the aſſiſtance of proper rules and maſters, do not arrive at even a critical ſkill in thoſe. But how few are there in this country, who can boaſt the ſame with reſpect to their own language! If it be aſſerted on one ſide, that there is no occaſion for taking ſuch pains with regard to a mother tongue, as

the knowledge of that will come of courſe; it may be affirmed on the other with greater juſtice, that there is much more occaſion to apply cloſely to the ſtudy of that than of any other; not only as it is a matter of much more importance to us than all the other languages in the world, but becauſe there are many errours, prejudices, and bad habits to be overcome in that, which is not the caſe in the others. For though the uſe of words will come of courſe, yet the right uſe of them will not; unleſs we allow that they have always the ſame preciſe meaning annexed to them, both by the people with whom we converſe, and by the writers whoſe works we read. Now nothing is more notorious than that moſt diſputes and controverſies which are carried on both in writing and ſpeaking, without ever coming to a concluſion, do not ariſe ſo much from any thing as a diſagreement in the meaning of words, and would for the moſt part ſpeedily be put an end to, were the diſputants only obliged to define their terms. For it muſt be obvious enough that two men who uſe the ſame words with any difference of meaning, can never agree in a concluſion. Thus the neglect of ſtudying our language would probably be found to be the chief ſource of errour both in opinion and conduct. As our knowledge of moſt things muſt depend

depend upon our rightly underſtanding the words which are their types, any miſconception of them muſt occaſion an errour in ideas, and that of courſe an errour in conduct. For as our notions and opinions are formed upon words, and as our actions are governed by our notions and opinions, men's conduct in life muſt depend more upon ſkill in language, than is generally imagined. Thus the ſtudy of the native tongue is a matter of more importance to ſociety, even with regard to morals, than will at firſt view be conceived.

'Should * it be the caſe in any country that 'an infinite number of books were read there, 'and very little knowledge obtained; that there 'ſhould be much ſpeaking and little underſtand-'ing; that diſputes upon all manner of topics 'ſhould be carried on without ever coming to 'an end, it would not follow that the intellec-'tual faculties of ſuch a people were inferiour 'to others, as the whole might eaſily be ſolved 'by conſidering the ſtate of their language. 'So far as that is obſcure or ill underſtood, ſo 'far muſt the knowledge acquired in it be con-'fuſed or erroneous. And when it is conſidered 'what little care is taken amongſt us to come 'at an accurate knowledge of a language, the

* Brit. Educ.

'moſt copious, and on many other accounts 'the moſt difficult to be underſtood, of any in 'the known world, there is no occaſion to 'wonder that we ſhould be the moſt unſettled 'in our notions, and the moſt divided in our 'opinions of any people, ſince the time of the 'ſeparation of philoſophy from the ſtudy of 'rhetoric, amongſt the Greeks. It is well 'known that the deſtruction of all uſeful know-'ledge ſoon followed that ſeparation amongſt 'them, nor can the reſtoration of it amongſt 'us, be obtained by any other means but by 'their re-union.'

This obſervation reminds me of the ſecond article before mentioned, I mean a facility in chuſing words, and a correct fluency of ſpeech. And theſe I have aſſerted can be acquired only by practice, and habit.

As habit renders moſt things eaſy, even ſuch as are in their nature exceedingly difficult, ſo it does remarkably promote a facility of delivering our ſentiments. Of the truth of this we have a convincing proof in the gentlemen of the bar; who being under a neceſſity of ſpeaking their extemporaneous thoughts, though at firſt they do it with great aukwardneſs, through the want of having been trained to this neceſſary branch of their profeſſion, yet in time, by perſeverance and practice, are enabled to ſpeak

in

in any cauſe with the utmoſt eaſe and readineſs. Whilſt on the contrary, they who are in holy orders, and rely on the aſſiſtance of their written diſcourſes, could not deliver three ſentences upon points of which they are the moſt perfect maſters, if their ſermons were not before them. Nay few of them would even be able to proceed in the uſual ſervice of the prayers, deeply impreſſed as it muſt be on their memories by continual repetition, if the Prayer-Book were not open before them. Such is the power of habit!

No obſervation is more common than that bookiſh men are remarkable for taciturnity. Nor is this ſilence to be conſidered as a mark of wiſdom, or the effect of thinking; for in reality ſuch men find it difficult, through want of practice, to expreſs their thoughts with freedom, and therefore avoid ſpeaking, as painful. Yet many of them can write their ſentiments with eaſe, becauſe they have accuſtomed themſelves to writing. Whilſt on the other hand a ſuperficial man of the world, by being habituated to converſation, ſhall be always ready to expreſs his thoughts with volubility and eaſe, tho' infinitely inferior to the ſtudious man both in knowledge of things and words; as would be ſufficiently apparent were he to ſit down and commit his thoughts to paper. Nay this very

man who has ſuch eaſe, readineſs, and fluency of expreſſion in company, were he called upon to deliver his thoughts in a public aſſembly, would ſtammer, heſitate, and be as incapable of acquitting himſelf well on ſuch an occaſion, as the ſtudious man.

And after this ſhall we be to ſeek for the moſt likely method to give a facility of ſpeaking in public? To form writers, you train them from the beginning in the practice of writing; to form ſpeakers, you muſt train them from the beginning in the practice of ſpeaking. Whether in ſuch a conſtitution as ours, gentlemen deſtined for the ſenate-houſe, the pulpit, or the bar, require to have their talents in writing or ſpeaking moſt cultivated, let the wiſe determine.

Let parents in general be aſked whether they would rather have their ſons writers or ſpeakers; whether they would have their names known as authors of pretty eſſays, or as remarkable for eloquence in the ſenate-houſe, the bar, or the pulpit? Suppoſing a neceſſity of the alternative, there can be no doubt which they would prefer. But when it is conſidered that there is no way ſo certain to make them good writers, as to make them good ſpeakers; that the ſame habit which gives fluency to the tongue, will alſo give freedom to the pen; and that the

ſame cultivation which forms the ear to harmonious and expreſſive cadences in delivery, muſt alſo communicate thoſe qualities to the ſtyle of the writer, if the two arts are carried on together; and on the contrary when we conſider that the utmoſt attention to written language will never in the leaſt improve the faculties of ſpeech, or talents of delivery, but rather impede than bring them forwards, as bookiſh men are obſerved to be more defective than others in thoſe points; is it not amazing that all pains and attention in the courſe of education are given to the latter art, and none at all to the former? As if we were a nation of deaf men, who could have no uſe of our tongues, and were obliged to tranſact all affairs by writing. But ſuch is the power of cuſtom!

Yet of all the prejudices which have prevailed in this country, there is one which ſeems to have the leaſt foundation in reaſon, although it is the moſt inveterate and hard to be removed of any; I mean an opinion before mentioned which too generally prevails, that we have no occaſion to ſtudy our native language, becauſe the knowledge of it will come to us of courſe. And this is a point maintained with great vehemence by many perſons, who at the ſame time allow that the people who underſtand Engliſh well are exceedingly few in number, and that

no

no quality is more rare than correctneſs in ſpeaking or writing it. How then can it be true that the knowledge of it will come of courſe? This prejudice can have no other foundation but that the ſtudy of Engliſh has not as yet been made a branch of education; for if that, as well as the ſtudy of other languages, had been part of the courſe, the very ſame men who now conſider it as unneceſſary, would upon the ſame principle, (prejudice of education) look upon it as a moſt eſſential point, and eſteem any man a madman or a fool, who ſhould propoſe to have it omitted as uſeleſs.

To ſuch as are not ſo far bigotted on this head as to exclude all reaſoning, I ſhall beg leave to obſerve, that againſt their opinion are the united judgments of ſome of the ableſt men that this country has produced, who had well weighed the point, and muſt be allowed to be competent judges of it. Theſe are Milton, Dryden, Locke, Addiſon, Berkley, and Swift; who have all in their turns pointed out that groſs defect in our education, and ſhewed the neceſſity there is of making the ſtudy of our language a material part of it.

But if the authority of theſe Moderns will not weigh with them, what will they ſay to the practice of thoſe great Ancients, whom they hold in ſuch high reverence, as to think no

pains too great when beſtowed upon the ſtudy of their languages, while they neglect their own? Do they not know that the firſt ſtudy of the boy at Athens was that of his native language, and that it was the laſt ſtudy quitted by the man? Do they not know that this was the caſe at Rome alſo in its moſt flouriſhing ſtate? And what was the conſequence of this general care and attention to that point? Did not theſe two countries produce ſuch numbers of excellent orators and writers, as the whole world has not equalled? Have not their languages gained immortality, while thoſe of ſuch nations as did not ſtudy theirs, have periſhed with the people, or changed with the generations? Which of the two examples is moſt worthy of imitation?

But ſtill if there are perſons who will allow no weight to the authority, and practice of the Ancients, and who will perſevere in their opinion founded upon the authority and practice of our forefathers; let them be told that they are joining with all the Barbarians of the world, not only againſt the poliſhed notions of antiquity, but thoſe of the preſent times. All barbarous nations agree in not ſtudying or cultivating their languages, and this is one of the characteriſtical marks of barbariſm. All civilized countries agree in ſtudying and cultivating

their

their languages, and this is amongſt the firſt proofs given of their politeneſs. To omit the practice of the Ancients, have we not inſtances of this in the French, Italians, Spaniards, nay of late in the Germans, and even the Ruſſians? But the Engliſhman will be apt to aſk whether it is poſſible, conſidering the juſt title which his country has to ſtand amongſt the foremoſt in point of literature, that any nations in the world ſhould dare to claſs them amongſt Barbarians? To whom it may be anſwered, indeed they will; and think you ſo too, whilſt you neglect the only means by which it is in your power to give them ocular proof of your being a people perfectly civilized, that is by opening to their view the treaſures of your language.

Voltaire proclaims your barbariſm through Europe, and his authority will go a great way, as his writings are more univerſally read than thoſe of all your authors put together. And this only becauſe he writes in a language which is eaſily acquired, on account of the pains taken to reduce it to rule and method. What avail your boaſtings of the excellence of your writers to the neighbouring nations, if it be rendered impracticable for them to ſee that excellence? or what credit will they give to your vaunts? Is there any barbarous nation without their bards, of whom they are as vain as you can be?

be? In the literary world nothing will be allowed to authority on theſe occaſions, they will judge only of what they ſee. 'Tis churliſh, 'tis inhoſpitable to ſhut your neighbours out as it were from all free communication with you, by the impenetrability of your language. They will hold it to be poor and not worth the coſt of poliſhing, otherwiſe you could not thus neglect it. However you may be upheld by national pride at home, your character will ſink abroad, in the learned world. Is it not a ſcandal to this country to have it ſaid with truth, by every foreigner who viſits this iſland, and enquires for a maſter to teach him the language, that no ſuch perſon is to be found; when in France, Italy, Spain, and Germany, multitudes offer themſelves to ſtrangers, perfectly qualified to make them adepts in their ſeveral tongues? If you are a true Engliſhman, and have the honour and intereſt of your country at heart, you will throw away this prejudice, and join in promoting a deſign to waſh off this ſtrong ſtain of barbariſm, which ſtill reſts upon this kingdom.

For what nobler end could a ſociety be inſtituted? And if even intereſted views alone be conſulted, what parent who has the welfare of his children at heart, will refuſe to throw in his mite on this occaſion? Parents alone will be ſufficient

ſufficient to compaſs the point, but there are others intereſted in the event as well as they; nay there are few Britiſh ſubjects who are not in ſome degree concerned. If there be any who wiſh to have the Engliſh language fixed to a ſtandard; any admirers of Shakeſpear, Milton, and Swift, who would contribute towards immortalizing their works, and handing them down to lateſt poſterity: If there are any friends to our excellent conſtitution, who would be deſirous of ſeeing the number of its guardians increaſed, by the increaſe of able ſpeakers in parliament: If there be any who would contribute to the ſupport of our pure religion, by furniſhing the prieſthood with their true arms, the weapons of oratory; and enabling them to perform Divine Service, ſo as that it ſhall not appear to be a mock-worſhip; they muſt, they will, if they have theſe, or any of theſe points at heart, ſet down their names in the liſt of the ENGLISH SOCIETY inſtituted for the purpoſes of refining and aſcertaining the Engliſh language, and for the eſtabliſhment of the Art of Elocution.

A DIS-

A

DISSERTATION

ON THE

CAUSES

OF THE

DIFFICULTIES,

WHICH OCCUR, IN LEARNING THE ENGLISH TONGUE.

With a SCHEME for publiſhing

An ENGLISH GRAMMAR

AND

DICTIONARY;

Upon a PLAN entirely new.

The Object of which ſhall be, to facilitate the Attainment of the ENGLISH TONGUE, and eſtabliſh a *Perpetual Standard* of PRONUNCIATION.

Addreſſed to a certain NOBLE LORD.

TO

A CERTAIN NOBLE LORD.

MY LORD,

I HAVE particular reaſons for chuſing to addreſs you in this manner, without proclaiming your ſtyle and title to the world. The way was open to me, by the ſolicitation of friends, to have obtained your Lordſhip's permiſſion of addreſſing you in the uſual form. But, my Lord, I would not chuſe on this occaſion, to be conſidered in the light of an author; of one who makes books for hire, and counts upon the dedication-purſe as part of his wages. I would rather wiſh to be conſidered as a man, who after much thought, application, and labour, has formed a plan, the execution of which may contribute highly to the benefit of theſe realms. I have pitched upon your Lordſhip in my own mind, as the propereſt perſonage to promote ſuch an undertaking, becauſe you have it moſt in your power; and I am informed by

thoſe who are beſt acquainted with your Lordſhip, that no one is more likely to have it in his inclination.

But as it is of great moment, that he who takes the lead in promoting a deſign of this nature, ſhould have the cauſe at heart, I have for this reaſon alſo, declined any application to your Lordſhip, in the uſual way. The undertaking is an arduous one: it will require zeal in the patron; and cannot be effectually promoted, or carried into execution, by any luke-warm encouragement, which is the uſual effect of the common methods of ſolicitation. In this way of laying it before your Lordſhip, it will be ſoon known whether you will voluntarily enter upon the office, and in that caſe only, ſhould I hope for ſucceſs to the deſign, from your Lordſhip's patronage.

To ſhew the benefits that would accrue to the public from the execution of the propoſed plan, there needs only to lay the following Queries before the world; and the anſwers to them from all men of underſtanding, will place that article in a clear light.

Whether it would not contribute much to promote the cauſe of religion, if the Service of the Church were always performed with propriety, and ſermons delivered with due force?

Whether

Whether it would not be of ſervice to the ſtate, if all our ſenators, who had from nature the abilities, ſhould alſo be furniſhed from art and practice, with the habitual power of delivering their ſentiments readily, in a correct, perſpicuous, and forcible manner? And whether this would not be equally uſeful to the gentlemen of the bar?

Whether it would not contribute much to the eaſe and pleaſure of ſociety, and improvement of politeneſs, if all gentlemen in public meetings, or private company, ſhould be able to expreſs their thoughts clearly, and with an utterance ſo regulated as not to give pain to the underſtanding, or offence to the ears of their auditors?

Whether the firſt ſtep neceſſary to the accompliſhment of theſe points, be not the opening a method, whereby all children of theſe realms, whether male or female, may be inſtructed from the firſt rudiments, in a grammatical knowledge of the Engliſh tongue, and the art of reading and ſpeaking with propriety and grace; in the ſame regular way, as other languages, and other arts, of infinitely leſs conſequence to them, are now taught?

Whether it would not greatly contribute to put an end to the odious diſtinction kept up between ſubjects of the ſame king, if a way

were opened, by which the attainment of the Engliſh tongue in its purity, both in point of phraſeology and pronunciation, might be rendered eaſy to all inhabitants of his Majeſty's dominions, whether of South or North Britain; of Ireland, or the colonies?

Whether it would not redound much to the honour of this nation, if the attainment of our tongue were rendered eaſy to foreigners, ſo as to enable them to read our excellent authors in the original?

Whether many important advantages would not accrue both to the preſent age, and to poſterity, if the Engliſh language were aſcertained, and reduced to a fixed and permanent ſtandard?

Theſe are queſtions which can have but one anſwer from all men of ſenſe. Some of our greateſt writers have ſhewn the neceſſity of accompliſhing theſe points; but as none of them have pointed out the means by which it might be done, the deſign is thought to be impracticable.

Swift indeed, in a letter to Lord Oxford, propoſes that a ſociety ſhould be eſtabliſhed, to conſider of ways and means for bringing about ſome of theſe purpoſes; but I have in * another place ſhewn, that little was to be expect-

* Britiſh Education, Book II. Chap. 10.

ed,

ed, from the labours of ſuch a ſociety, even had the propoſal taken place.

But, my Lord, I do not approach you with ſo vague and diſcouraging a propoſal. I have not ventured to lay any before you, till I had well conſidered the means, by which all theſe points may be accompliſhed: Means, which if properly applied, cannot fail of attaining their ends, in a much ſhorter ſpace of time, than can eaſily be imagined. I am the more emboldened to make this aſſertion, becauſe the whole plan has undergone the examination of ſome of the ableſt heads in theſe realms, who all agree in its practicability, according to the method propoſed.

The firſt neceſſary ſtep towards it, will be the publication of ſuch a grammar, and dictionary, as is here propoſed. This muſt be the foundation of the whole, and that once well laid, the ſuperſtructure, ſtupendous as the fabric may ſeem in idea, might ſoon be finiſhed. If your Lordſhip ſhould entertain any doubt of this, upon being honoured with your commands, I ſhall lay the model before you, and ſhew alſo that there will be no deficiency of materials, when once the work ſhall be ſet about.

I would not wiſh to be conſidered by your Lordſhip in the light of a perſon who is ſoliciting a favour and endeavouring to compaſs a

point that may turn out to his own private benefit, under the ſpecious appearance of public good. No, my Lord, I am ſoliciting no favour for myſelf, and my motives in making this propoſal are ſo far from being ſelfiſh, that I am convinced I am acting againſt my intereſt; I am acting too againſt the opinion and advice of moſt of my friends, who conſider it in the ſame light. There are other ways open to me of raiſing a larger fortune to my family, than I could reaſonably expect in this, and with infinitely leſs labour to myſelf. And I have given the preference to this, merely from a conviction that I ſhall have lived a much more uſeful member of ſociety, in the one way, than in the other.

But yet I do not carry my notions to ſuch a romantic height, as to be inſenſible to the intereſts of my family, the calls of duty, and the ties of nature. I would not enter into the undertaking, without a moral certainty, that my income ſhould not greatly fall ſhort of what I might reaſonably expect to make by purſuing another courſe. The extraordinary labour that will attend it (and very laborious indeed will the execution of it be) I am willing to ſubmit to, without any other reward in view, than the inward ſatisfaction ariſing from the accompliſhment of ſo uſeful a deſign.

On

On the other hand, it appears to me that your Lordſhip is much more nearly intereſted in the event of this undertaking. Bleſt as you are in the poſſeſſion of the beſt gifts of fortune, a noble birth, an exalted ſtation, and ample poſſeſſions, from what ſources can a mind ſuch as your's, derive addition to its happineſs, ſo great, as from the diſcharge of your duty to your king and country? Whence can ſuch funds of inward ſatisfaction ariſe, as from your uſing your beſt endeavours to contribute to the glory of your royal maſter's reign, and to deſerve the praiſes and good-will of all your fellow-ſubjects. If your Lordſhip will attentively weigh the conſequences of carrying ſuch a plan into execution, you will find, that all theſe deſirable ends, are more likely to be obtained in a higher degree this way, than perhaps in any other. What can be more worthy of the attention of an Engliſh king, than the Engliſh language? Of a king who glories in the name of Briton, than the ſpreading that language in its purity, thro'out his Britiſh dominions? What can add more luſtre to his reign, than to have it on record, that it was in that reign, ſo uſeful an inſtitution firſt took place? How will it ſtand diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of his predeceſſors, by whom, unhappily for theſe kingdoms, ſo material an article was wholly overlooked!

The people of theſe realms are highly indebted to your Lordſhip, for the ſhare you are well known to have had, in forming a king, fit to govern a free nation. A king, who had he no claim to the crown, from right of inheritance, would have been entitled to it, if elective, from merit. Nothing could now give you a juſter claim to the thanks of your royal maſter, than the purſuing the beſt means of forming the riſing generation in ſuch a way, as to make them fit ſubjects for ſuch a monarch; fit inſtruments to carry all his wiſe and gracious purpoſes, for the good of theſe realms, into execution. And with regard to your fellow ſubjects, all parents muſt have the ſtrongeſt ſenſe of gratitude to a man, who has put it in their power to have their children trained in ſuch a way, as to make them wiſer, and better men, than their fathers: The riſing generation muſt look on you as a ſecond father; and poſterity will adore your name.

I know I ſhall be looked upon as very antiquated, and unfaſhionable in my notions, in offering any argument on the laſt ſcore, that of *poſterity* I mean, as a motive to action. The maxim of the Oxford Fellow, that *of taking care of the preſent times, and letting poſterity ſhift for itſelf*, ſeems to have been adopted by all our Engliſh miniſters. And accordingly, *they*

have

have had their reward; not one of their names having had any reverence paid to it by poſterity. Whilſt that of Richlieu, the French miniſter, ſtands diſtinguiſhed in the liſt, not only in his own country, but in the eyes of all Europe, chiefly on the account of inſtitutions eſtabliſhed by him, of the ſame nature here recommended, whereof poſterity was to receive the principal benefit. It is in your power, my Lord, to ſtand ſingle with reſpect to the liſt of your predeceſſors, and foremoſt with regard to thoſe, who ſhall hereafter have elevation of mind ſufficient to follow your example.

It is in your power, my Lord, to furniſh an occaſion for ſome future hiſtorian, to mark this æra out, as one of the moſt memorable in the whole Engliſh hiſtory. You may enable him to ſay, " That it was in the year 1762, that the " firſt eſtabliſhment was made in Great Britain, " for the ſtudy of the Engliſh language, and " the art of ſpeaking. How much are we in- " debted (proceeds the hiſtorian) to that glori- " ous inſtitution! It is owing to that, that our " ſenate has been furniſhed with ſuch numbers " of powerful, and well-practiſed ſpeakers, as " to baniſh the giant corruption, with his hun- " dred hands, from this realm of freedom. It " is owing to that, that the ſacred miniſtry have " been able to diſcharge the moſt important

" part

" part of their function; and to impreſs the
" precepts of our pure religion, ſo ſtrongly on
" the hearts of their hearers, as to make them
" Chriſtians not in profeſſion only, but in prac-
" tice. It is owing to that, that the ambiguity
" and obſcurity of our laws, have given way to
" clearneſs and preciſion; and the delay and
" tedioufneſs of ſuits, the accounts of which in
" thoſe days almoſt exceed belief, were baniſh-
" ed, to make way for the preſent eaſy and
" ſpeedy method of obtaining juſtice, and ſet-
" tling all matters of property and right. It is
" to that noble inſtitution we are indebted, for
" the refinement and eſtabliſhment of the
" Engliſh language, upon ſo ſolid a foundation,
" that time ſhall no more prevail againſt it,
" than it has againſt the languages of old
" Greece and Rome; and Milton and Shake-
" ſpear ſhall not periſh, but with Homer and
" Virgil, in the general diſſolution of the world.

" It is amazing, when we reflect that our an-
" ceſtors, animated as they were by the moſt
" enthuſiaſtic ſpirit of liberty, and ſtruggling
" for ages, with a courage and reſolution not to
" be matched in ſtory, to eſtabliſh a free con-
" ſtitution both in church and ſtate, ſhould ne-
" ver before that period, have thought of ſe-
" curing thoſe valuable bleſſings to their poſ-
" terity, by cultivating thoſe powers, which

alone

" alone could ſupport that conſtitution, either " in religious, or civil affairs, the powers of " oratory. This point may indeed well aſto- " niſh any one, who has not ſufficiently weigh- " ed the force of cuſtom. How much there- " fore are we indebted to that truly patriot ſpirit, " who at that juncture, broke the fetters of the " tyrant, ſnapped aſunder the bonds of preju- " dice, and gave riſe to thoſe inſtitutions, which " have ſince flouriſhed in ſo eminent a degree, " and been productive of all our moſt valuable " enjoyments: Which ſecured thoſe bleſſings " to us, that have raiſed our country to a pitch " beyond that of Athens or Rome, and made it at " once the envy and the wonder of the world.

" It is true an attempt of this kind was made " in the reign of James the Firſt, by the Duke " of Buckingham; and we are informed by Swift, " that in the reign of Queen Anne, the Earl of " Oxford intended to revive it. But the execu- " tion of this excellent deſign, was reſerved to " adorn the opening of the reign of George the " Third. The ſucceſs of it was entirely ow- " ing to the zealous endeavours of ——."

Here, my Lord, is a blank ——. The name of that miniſter which ſhall fill it, will be more memorable in future times than that of Mæcenas; and the name of his royal maſter, ſuperior to that of Auguſtus.

I ſhall

I ſhall add no more, but that all things are ready to carry the deſign into execution, provided there be ſufficient encouragement. Yours be the honour, let the nation reap the benefit. I am,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP'S

moſt obedient,

and devoted

humble ſervant,

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

A DIS-

A

DISSERTATION, &c.

IT is a truth well known, that when a foreigner arrives in London, and enquires for a maſter to teach him the language of the country, there is no ſuch perſon to be found; nor is there any method open to him, by which he may be aſſiſted, in attaining a juſt manner of ſpeaking Engliſh.

This is not the caſe in the more ſouthern countries of Europe, ſuch as Italy, France, and Spain; where foreigners may be taught to ſpeak the reſpective tongues of thoſe countries, with the utmoſt propriety, by ſkilful maſters, with the aid of proper grammars and dictionaries.

On this account it is, that the Engliſh are ſtill claſſed by the people of thoſe countries, amongſt the more rude, and ſcarcely civilized nations of the North. They affix the term of barbariſm to this country, in the ſame manner as the Greeks did to the reſt of the world; and on the ſame principle, on account of the neglect of regulating and poliſhing our ſpeech. It

was

was on that account chiefly that the Greeks looked down upon the reſt of the world with contempt; nor did they make any diſtinction between the Romans their conquerors, and other nations, including them under the common denomination of Barbarians; till the Romans, by a like application to the culture of their language, became their rivals in that article, and have had their names ever ſince joined to them, in contradiſtinction to all other nations of antiquity.

And indeed, a neglect of their ſpeech, is not only a characteriſtical mark of barbariſm in all nations, but the ſure means of continuing them in that ſtate; as on the contrary, the regulation and refinement of language is a neceſſary ſtep towards introducing politeneſs. It is therefore much to be wiſhed, for the honour, as well as intereſt of this country, that an article of ſuch importance, ſhould no longer be ſo ſhamefully neglected.

The great difficulty of the Engliſh tongue lies in the pronunciation; an exactneſs in which, after all the pains they can take, is found to be unattainable, not only by foreigners, but * pro-

* By Provincials is here meant all Britiſh ſubjects, whether inhabitants of Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the ſeveral counties of England, or the city of London, who ſpeak a corrupt dialect of the Engliſh tongue.

vincials.

vincials. The chief cauſe of this, has been the want of method in teaching it, by a well-digeſted ſyſtem of rules. Some of our grammarians indeed, begin their work with a definition, that would lead us to expect a regular treatiſe on this ſubject. They ſet out with telling us that grammar conſiſts of two parts, Orthoëpy, or the juſt manner of pronouncing; and Orthography, or the juſt manner of writing words. So that they define grammar to be the art of teaching people to ſpeak, and write correctly, according to the cuſtom of thoſe whoſe language we learn. But after they have made this diſtinction, they ſcarce take any farther notice of Orthoëpy, and their whole pains are employed about the other article, Orthography. They were deterred from that part of the work by the immenſe difficulty of the undertaking; and as there never has been any public encouragement to ſuch a work, either by ſocieties, or royal munificence, (means which produced the regulation and refinement of their ſeveral tongues in neighbouring countries) there has been no one hardy enough to engage in the taſk, upon a precarious proſpect of reward.

This is the taſk on which I am now employed; to reſtore the firſt, and nobleſt part of grammar, to its juſt rank and power; and to

reduce the other to its due ſtate of ſubordination: to make the ſpoken language, as it ought to be, the archetype; of which, the written language ſhould be conſidered only as the type.

In order to this, I ſhall firſt trace the difficulties, which lie in the way of ſuch an undertaking, to their ſource; and then, by ſhewing how all obſtacles may be removed, point out an eaſy way to the accompliſhment of their deſign.

The chief difficulty ariſes, from the little care there has been taken, to preſerve any analogy between the written, and the ſpoken language; the ſpelling, and the pronunciation of words: as alſo a neglect of analogy, in the rules, by which the written language, conſidered by itſelf, without reference to ſpeech, ought to be governed. That the Engliſh reader may ſee this difficulty in its proper light, I ſhall here preſent him with ſome ſpecimens of the irregularity, and confuſion, every where to be found in the graphic art. Otherwiſe, having by long practice overcome the difficulty, he may not think it ſo great as it is; nor ſee the true reaſon, that a juſt pronunciation of Engliſh, is found ſo impracticable a point to foreigners and provincials.

No. 1.

	Firſt	*Second*	*Third*	*Fourth*	*Fifth*
A	hat	hate	hall		
E	bet	there	here	her	
I	fit	bite	field	ſtir	birth
o	not	note	prove	love	
u	cub	buſh	cube	buſy	

No. 2.

Different ſounds marked exactly in the ſame way.

There here | grove prove love
Fourth youth mouth tough | who go
Door noon blood | bear hear head heart

No. 3.

The ſame ſounds marked in different ways.

2d a		3d e	
ai	fail	e	he
ay	day	ee	ſeem
ey	they	ea	veal
eigh	weigh	ie	field
eig	reign	ei	deceive

3d a		2d o	
aw	draw	o	go
au	cauſe	ow	blow
all	fall	ew	ſhew
ald	bald	oe	foe
alk	talk	ou	fourth
oa	broad	oo	door
ough	ought	oa	groan
augh	caught		

3d o		1ſt u
o	who	u bud
oo	noon	oo blood
omb	tomb	ou tough
ou	youth	o word
		i bird
		e her

3d u	
u	cube
eu	feud
ew	new
ue	clue
iew	view

On looking over the above Scheme, we ſhall perceive in No. 1, that every vowel ſtands as a mark for three, four, or five different ſounds. In No. 2, that two, three, or four different ſounds are marked exactly in the ſame way. In No. 3, that the ſame ſound is marked in four, five, ſix, ſeven, or eight different ways.

So much for the irregularity in the uſe of our vowels; nor ſhall we find the ſtate of our conſonants much better.

C has three ſounds	k	care
	s	ceaſe
	ſh	ſocial

F has

F has its ſound marked by two different combinations of letters,	Ph	Philip
	gh	laugh
G has two ſounds		gold
		gentle
J has the ſame ſound as that of 2d G		joy
		gentle
S has four ſounds	s	yes
	z	roſe
	ſh	paſſion
	zh	oſier
T alſo has four ſounds	t	tell
	s	ſatiety
	ſh	nation
	ch	queſtion
X has three ſounds	gz	example
	ks	vex
	z	Xerxes
Th has two ſounds	dh	then
	th	thin
Ch has three ſounds	k	chorus
	ſh	chaiſe
	ch	charity

Gh has two ſounds	g	ghoſt
	f	laughter
and is often mute, as in		daughter

This is but a ſmall ſpecimen, of the irregularities to be found in the ſtate of our written language; yet it may ſerve to ſhew, how difficult, nay impoſſible, the attempt muſt be, to acquire a knowledge of the true pronunciation of Engliſh, unleſs the learner be furniſhed with a proper clue, to guide him through this labyrinth.

Words written, may be conſidered two ways; either as types of ſounds, which ſtand for ideas; or, immediate types of ideas, without any reference to ſound. Deaf men can conſider them only in the latter light: To thoſe who have the organs of hearing, they may ſtand in both, or either.

When written words are conſidered only as the types of ſounds, in order to make them correſpond to their archetypes, the four following rules ſhould be ſtrictly obſerved:

1. No character ſhould be ſet down in any word, which is not pronounced.

2. Every diſtinct ſimple ſound, ſhould have a diſtincter character to mark it; for which, it ſhould uniformly ſtand.

3. The

3. The ſame character ſhould never be ſet down, as the repreſentative of two different ſounds.

4. All compound ſounds, ſhould be marked only by ſuch characters, as will naturally, and neceſſarily produce thoſe ſounds, upon being properly pronounced, in the order in which they are placed.

Theſe rules were ſtrictly obſerved in the juſtly-celebrated language of old Greece, and in a great meaſure alſo, in that of Rome after the refinement of their tongue; inſomuch that the knowledge of their alphabet alone, and of the power of the ſeveral letters, together with the manner of joining them in forming ſyllables and words; enabled every one, without further aid of rules or maſters, to pronounce their words properly in reading, excepting in the article of quantity: And their graphic art wanted nothing of perfection, but ſome marks, to diſtinguiſh the long, from the ſhort ſounds of the vowels. Whereas in the Engliſh all theſe rules are ſo frequently violated, or rather ſo totally diſregarded, that no aſſiſtance can at preſent be derived to pronunciation from reading.

Such indeed is the ſtate of our written language, that the darkeſt hieroglyphics, or moſt difficult cyphers, which the art of man has hi-

therto found out, were not better calculated to conceal the ſentiments of thoſe who uſed them, from all who had not the key, than the ſtate of our ſpelling is, to conceal the true pronunciation from all, except a few well-educated natives. Nay, our ſpelling is built upon ſo perverſe a principle, that it is laid down as a maxim, by one who took great pains to examine its ſtate, that all words which can be ſounded different ways, muſt be written according to the hardeſt, harſheſt, longeſt, and moſt unuſual ſound. As this erroneous and perplexed ſtate of our orthography is the true reaſon that our language is ſo little ſought after abroad, or ſtudied at home; that its true pronunciation is ſo impracticable to foreigners, and ſo ſeldom to be met with in natives; that it is thought to have ſuch barbariſm in ſound by thoſe of other countries, who judge of the ſtate of its ſound from the manner of ſpelling words in books: and that its true powers and beauty are ſo little known by thoſe whoſe mother tongue it is, but who have never turned their thoughts to examine it in its living ſtate, paſſing judgment on it likewiſe from its written ſtate, as foreigners do: As all theſe evils ariſe chiefly from that cauſe, there cannot be a matter of more importance in the ſubject,

which

which I have undertaken, than to lay open the ſource of this irregularity and confuſion.

The chief cauſe of the irregular ſtate of our ſpelling, will at once appear, when we reflect that we have adopted the Roman alphabet to be the repreſentative of our ſounds. Now if we have a greater number of ſimple ſounds in our tongue, than there are letters in that alphabet, it muſt neceſſarily follow that the ſurplus number of ſimple ſounds can have no peculiar characters to repreſent them in writing; and conſequently, that either they muſt be marked by ſingle characters, which ſtand alſo for other ſounds; or by combinations of characters, which, ſeparately taken, ſtand for other ſimple ſounds.

This was not the caſe of the Greeks and Romans, who had each an alphabet of their own, peculiarly adapted to their ſeveral tongues; in which every ſimple ſound had its diſtinct mark, by which it was uniformly and invariably repreſented; nor did the ſame character ever ſtand for two different ſounds, nor was any ſimple ſound ever marked by more than one character, except to diſtinguiſh quantity, as in the eta and omega of the Greeks: As the Romans had a greater number of ſounds in their tongue, they had alſo a greater number of letters.

Such was the caſe of the old Saxons alſo, and the ſeveral nations of Europe, before the revival of ancient literature; each having an alphabet to their reſpective tongues, though not framed or uſed by thoſe Barbarians, with that exactneſs and accuracy which were ſo conſpicuous in thoſe enlightened and civilized countries. Upon the revival of learning, the Latin tongue was held in ſuch univerſal admiration, and came into ſuch general uſe, that by common conſent the Roman alphabet, which became known to all the learned by this means, was adopted to be the common repreſentative of all the different tongues of the ſeveral nations of Europe, in which ancient literature was eſtabliſhed. This could not happen without prejudice to analogy between ſpeech and writing in all thoſe countries; and therefore it required great pains in their ſeveral grammarians, and a multitude of rules, to adjuſt the difference between them; which however has been tolerably well accompliſhed by thoſe nations, who have wiſely taken the pains to eſtabliſh ſuch a regulation, and by that means rendered the knowledge of their ſeveral tongues, and the ſpeaking them with propriety, eaſy to learners. But the Engliſh, upon this occaſion, were greater ſufferers than any other people; for having a greater number of ſimple

ſounds

ſounds in their tongue than any of the reſt, there was a proportional deficiency of letters to be their ſymbols; and unleſs they had proceeded by certain and well-grounded rules, in marking thoſe ſupernumerary ſounds, by ſteady combinations of letters, there was the greateſt danger that the utmoſt confuſion would enſue. But this was done amongſt us, with ſo little judgment or regard to order, that chance and caprice only ſeemed to bear ſway, in modelling the ſpelling by the new alphabet. All the rules of orthography, by which the wiſe nation, from whom we borrowed the letters, regulated theirs, were broken thro' and wholly diſregarded. The diſorder in a ſhort time ſo infected the whole maſs of our language, that it was judged to be incurable: and all attempts towards a remedy, proved ſo ineffectual, as to confirm men in that opinion, and turn their thoughts from ſo vain a purſuit. When this point was given up, the ſpirit of pedantry, which then univerſally prevailed, ſuggeſted a new uſe of written language, unknown to the Greeks and Romans, by which theſe pedants, as far as lay in their power, endeavoured to make a change in its very nature and end, and conſequently in the rules by which it was to be governed. They contended, that the principal object in ſpelling, ought not to be to guide learners to the true pronunciation

pronunciation of words, but to aſſiſt the underſtanding in finding out their meaning; by preſerving ſuch letters, and placing them in ſuch order as might beſt point out their derivation, and recal to mind the words in the original languages (but more particularly the Latin) from which they were borrowed and adopted by us.

Thus multitudes of letters were preſerved in writing, that had no ſound in uttering the words in which they were to be ſeen; and the uſe of vowels and diphthongs, together with their ſeveral powers, were all confounded; as it was determined that ſuch as were in the original ſhould maintain their poſt in writing, though in pronunciation, the ſounds of different vowels and diphthongs ſhould be heard. Thus were theſe two kinds of language, the ſpoken and the written, which in all reaſon ſhould have been as inſeparable as body and ſhadow, ſtill farther diſunited by the joint endeavours of pedantry and barbariſm, contrary to the practice of the Greeks and Romans. As the pedants had no power over the pronunciation of our language, all words adopted into our tongue, were made in time to conform to the mode of our ſpeech, according to the rules of our own analogy in pronouncing, not that of the nations from which they were derived;

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they were fitted to the Engliſh organs, admitted as denizens, and made free of the language. But the pedants, who had great power over the written language, reſolved that theſe words ſhould always retain the marks of their foreign extraction in writing, and wear a perpetual badge of diſtinction from natives; and the ſpecious reaſon they have aſſigned for this proceeding is, that written language is in this way better calculated to aſſiſt the underſtanding, which is a more important end, than aſſiſting pronunciation.

On the other hand, it was warmly contended that words ought to be ſpelt as they are pronounced; and no doubt this opinion might have been ſupported by ſuch unanſwerable reaſons, that notwithſtanding the power of cuſtom, the force of faſhion, and the efforts of pedantry againſt it, it muſt in time have made way, and our ſpelling would have been gradually reformed and moulded by that rule, were there not an unſeen obſtacle in the way ariſing from a defective alphabet. The thing was indeed impracticable, according to the method they purſued, but not perceived to be ſo, for the cauſe was unknown, which gave riſe to many ſucceſſive fruitleſs efforts. The ſticklers for derivation, indulged a literary vanity; and the partiſans of pronunciation, knew they had

common

common ſenſe on their ſide, in the point which they had in view, but had not gone deep enough into the ſubject to ſee the chief difficulty in their way in the purſuit of it. Between theſe there was a ſort of moderating party, who on many occaſions, reſerved ſome letters as marks of derivation, and added others as marks of pronunciation. As in the word *honour* derived from *honor* in the Latin, and ſounded by us as if it were ſpelt *onnur*, they preſerved the *h* and the *o* to ſhew its derivation, and added the *u* to mark the ſound. The ſame is to be obſerved of the *o* in *favour*, *labour*, and many others. But of late pedantry has taken up arms againſt the *u*, baniſhed it as an intruder, and introduced the ſheer Latin words into Engliſh. Many ſucceſſive, and alternate innovations, on the ſeveral principles, have kept our written language in a continual ſtate of fluctuation; and theſe, together with a defective alphabet, the regulation of which was originally left to caprice and faſhion, have made our written language appear ſo completely a chaos, that it has been hitherto thought impoſſible, to find either rule or order in it; and the knowlege of it at preſent is hardly to be obtained by the utmoſt efforts of induſtry.

Whilſt the diſpute between the oppoſite parties remains unſettled, it is impoſſible that the part

part of the confuſion, which is occaſioned by it, can be removed; and if, upon adjuſting the difference between them, the remedy would offer itſelf, and were within reach, nothing would be ſo eaſy as to ſhew that all the arguments advanced by the advocates for derivation, however ſpecious at firſt view, are, in reality, to the laſt degree weak and frivolous; and have taken their riſe wholly from a partial and miſtaken view of the end and uſe of written language. And on the other hand, it might be demonſtrated, by more cogent arguments than any hitherto uſed, that the advocates for ſpelling according to pronunciation, are engaged in a juſt cauſe; which they know not how to defend, from want of a full comprehenſion of the ſubject; and that they have failed of their end, by endeavouring to uſe means, which are utterly inadequate to the attainment of it. But as the ſettling this point would only clear the way for alleviating a ſmall part of the diſeaſe, whoſe ſource lies deeper, in the very vitals, in the alphabet itſelf; I ſhall not waſte my time in examining the branching ſtreams, but go at once to the fountain head.

It is well known that the written language, in its preſent ſtate, is by no means a guide to a right pronunciation of the Engliſh tongue. To the truth of this, not only all foreigners, but

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the Iriſh, the Scotch, the Welſh, the inhabitants of the ſeveral counties of England, nay of the very metropolis itſelf, can bear teſtimony. And even amongſt the few who are maſters of the true pronunciation, it might be proved that they are in no ſhape indebted for it to books. Is there a man deficient in this reſpect, either foreigner, who is deſirous of ſpeaking it, or native, who uſes it as his mother tongue, in the corrupt ſtate, which cuſtom has eſtabliſhed, in the place of his birth or education, that does not wiſh the means of acquiring the polite and moſt approved pronunciation were in his power? To ſatisfy the deſire and ſupply the wants of all ſuch is the intention of the plan which I have to offer on this head. For them, and for them only, is it calculated; nor ought the opinion of ſuch, as find no want of this kind, be aſked, or their ſuffrages taken. They are indeed but too ready to pronounce that they ſee no occaſion for any thing of this kind, becauſe they expect no benefit to themſelves to be derived from it; but this ſelfiſh judgment of a few, ought not to have any weight againſt the intereſt of foreigners in general, and ninety-nine in a hundred of his majeſty's ſubjects; let me add alſo, againſt the intereſts of the Engliſh language itſelf. All ſuch as think they cannot be benefited by it, will ſhew themſelves candid,

candid, by being neutral; or generous, by promoting the plan, if it meets with their approbation. The plan itſelf is well worthy the attention of thoſe, who do not hope benefit from it, on account of the end propoſed by it; which is no leſs than laying down a method, by which foreigners, as well as natives, may acquire the true pronunciation of Engliſh, by the aſſiſtance of books chiefly; in ſpite of the ſuppoſed impracticability of ſuch a deſign.

The pronunciation of a language may be acquired either from converſation or books. The latter method, for the reaſons already aſſigned, is wholly given up in our tongue; and the pronunciation of all natives of theſe countries, is entirely formed, from the cuſtom which prevails in the places of their reſpective birth and education. The dialects are different, not only in the ſeveral countries, but counties of the ſame country. The ſtandard of pronunciation is affixed to the cuſtom which prevails amongſt people of education at court, ſo that none but ſuch as are born and bred up amongſt them, or have conſtant opportunities of converſing with them, and that too in early years, before the pliant organs have taken their bent, can be ſaid to be maſters of it: And theſe are but a few, compared to the millions who ſpeak the ſame tongue, and cannot have ſuch oppor-

tunity. Now if a method of acquiring a juſt pronunciation by books, as well as converſation, were eſtabliſhed, the acquiſition would not be circumſcribed within ſuch narrow bounds, but would lie open to all Britiſh ſubjects wherever born, as well as to all foreigners, with but little aid from maſters. This would be making a noble uſe of the invention of printing, which might have given us ſuch an advantage over the Ancients in this reſpect, as well as many others; but which, thro' the abuſe of it, it is to be feared has done more harm than good. If the ſtandard of pronunciation had been affixed to the written language, it is evident how permanent it might have been rendered by fixed marks; and how univerſally it might have been ſpread by means of the preſs, and the cheapneſs of books, which has made the art of reading (confined to the opulent chiefly amongſt the Ancients) familiar to the loweſt people. Let us therefore examine, in the firſt place, whether it was practicable to have made the written language a guide to juſt pronunciation, ſuppoſing that to have been the object on the firſt regulation and attempts to ſettle it; and afterwards, from a view of its deficiencies, and inability to anſwer that end, in its preſent ſtate, whether ſome method may not be found out to ſupply thoſe defects, and give it ſtill power to

aſcertain the pronunciation, and to ſerve as a ſure guide to learners.

However evident it may be to a diligent enquirer, that written language might be made a perfect ſtandard of pronunciation, or that words might be ſo ſpelt upon paper, as that every one acquainted with the true power of the letters, and the rules of ſpelling, ſhould upon the view, be able to ſound them properly, yet will it be far from appearing in this light, to ſuch as have never conſidered the written language, farther than in its preſent defective and irregular ſtate. In order to ſhew the practicability of the thing, in the eaſieſt and cleareſt manner to all apprehenſions, I ſhall beg of thoſe who have any doubt about it, to compare the ſtate of the graphic art, which repreſents articulate ſounds, with that of her ſiſter art, which repreſents thoſe of the inarticulate kind; I mean, the art of writing words, with that of writing muſical notes. In the latter art, every ſound, which can poſſibly be produced in harmonious compoſitions, has its peculiar and diſtinct character in writing; and all combinations of ſuch ſounds, are ſo exactly pointed out by ſettled, ſteady, viſible marks, both with regard to tone and time, that whoever has once made himſelf maſter of their powers, can never be miſtaken in reading muſic. Hence it is that the written

language of muſic is become univerſal, and is to be learned with equal eaſe and certainty by the natives of all countries. And has not this given a vaſt ſuperiority to the muſical graphic art, over the rhetorical? Ought this to be the caſe? Are inarticulate ſounds of more conſequence to mankind than the articulate? Is muſic ſuperior in utility to poetry or oratory; let me add, even in charms? Is the inſtrument by which one of the ſenſes only is gratified, and a tranſient pleaſure obtained, of more value than one, whereby the ſame ſenſe may be equally gratified, and at the ſame time knowledge acquired, the underſtanding enlarged, and the power increaſed of communicating all the nobleſt affections and emotions from ſoul to ſoul? If not, why ſuch care, ſuch accuracy in the one; why ſuch neglect, ſuch confuſion in the other? The diſcuſſion of theſe queſtions will naturally lead us to the very bottom of the ſubject; and by laying open the cauſes of the different procedure in theſe two arts, ſhew what have been the obſtacles in the way, which have prevented the one from arriving at the ſame perfection as the other, and diſcloſe the means of ſtill accompliſhing ſo deſirable a point.

Upon enquiring into the reaſon of the different ſtates of the two arts, the firſt obſervation

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that occurs is, that the chief and ultimate end of muſic is to gratify the ear, by pleaſing proportions of ſounds; but the chief and ultimate end of ſpeech, is to inform the underſtanding, and the pleaſure it may give the ear, is but a ſecondary one. Conſequently it was a more neceſſary object in the former, to be attentive to exactneſs in marking ſounds, than in the latter art. But there aroſe a ſtill greater neceſſity for the utmoſt nicety and accuracy in the graphic art of muſic, from another eſſential difference between muſic and ſpeech; between the manner of conveying articulate, and inarticulate ſounds to the ear. A very little progreſs in the muſical art, would ſoon convince the profeſſors, that much greater delight would ariſe from a concert of various inſtruments, than from any performance on a ſingle one; and as the harmony muſt ariſe from their exact correſpondence to each other both in time and tune, it was impoſſible to accompliſh this, but by the greateſt accuracy in the notes and marks, which diſtinguiſhed the ſeveral ſounds and times. From the moment therefore that they ſet about the work, they muſt have had a perpetual ſpur to their induſtry, till it was accompliſhed, as nothing ſhort of perfection could anſwer the end propoſed; for the leaſt defect in either of thoſe articles, muſt be conſtantly productive of diſcord, inſtead of har-

mony. Thus we may conſider a band of muſic playing in concert, as a number of perſons reading together exactly in the ſame manner, both in tone and time. But this is not the caſe with regard to the readers of articulate ſounds, or words; which can be read aloud only by one perſon at a time, ſo as to be underſtood by the hearers. And as the being underſtood is the chief object of the reader of words, and the delight reſulting from a juſt and graceful pronunciation, only a ſecondary one, the former may in a great meaſure be accompliſhed without the latter; and conſequently, there is not the ſame neceſſity, that the reader of words, ſhould be as complete a maſter of the tones and proportions of his marks, as the reader of muſic of his notes; whoſe chief end is to delight, and who cannot accompliſh that end, any other way, but by the moſt accurate knowledge of the ſeveral powers of thoſe notes.

From this view of the different ends propoſed in theſe two arts, we may ſee the reaſon of the different means uſed to attain thoſe ends. To repreſent ſounds was the ultimate object of the muſical graphic art; to repreſent ideas was the principal one of the rhetorical; and as this might be done without any reference to ſound at all, the repreſentation of ſounds was not an eſſential, but only a ſecondary object. The

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ſtate of written language therefore has been very different in different nations of the world, according to the object which they had in view in framing it; which may be reduced to three kinds. The firſt, That, which had ideas for its immediate object, without reference to ſounds. The ſecond, That, which had ſounds for its immediate object, and whoſe chief end was to give an exact repreſentation of them, as in the muſical art. The third, That which profeſſed to have ſounds for its object, but was little ſolicitous about accuracy in marking them.

The firſt of theſe has been called the language of hieroglyphics; and there is reaſon to believe, both from hiſtory and the nature of things, that this was the firſt kind of written language, or method of communicating ideas by viſible marks. This art was known to the Ægyptians previous to the invention of letters: and we find it alſo in uſe amongſt the Mexicans, when firſt ſubdued by the Spaniards. It is natural indeed to ſuppoſe that the firſt attempts to communicate ideas through the eye, would be by drawing the ſimilitude of ſuch things as are the objects of that ſenſe; to delineate for inſtance the figure of a man, a tree, or a horſe, to ſtand as marks of our ideas of theſe ſeveral objects. And this written language, ſo far as it could go, was certainly the

moſt perfect, and the types in it were moſt correſpondent to their archetypes. But as the method was exceedingly ſlow and laborious, and could exhibit only a ſmall part of what paſſed in the mind, being confined to objects of one ſenſe only, the induſtry of man was ſet to work to find out a more eaſy, expeditious, and comprehenſive method of communication in writing; and this ended in the invention of letters; which by being made the ſymbols of articulate ſounds, became capable of conveying knowledge in as extenſive a manner as ſpeech, and with equal eaſe and celerity.

The utility of this diſcovery was too apparent, not to be immediately embraced in all countries where it was made known. But very different was the uſe made of it in different countries, in proportion to the wiſdom and good order which prevailed in the different ſtates. The Greeks acknowledged that they were indebted to Barbarians for the invention of letters, but boaſt that they alone knew how to make a right uſe of the invention. They were indeed the firſt people in the world, who made it one of their chief objects, to regulate and refine their ſpeech, and employed themſelves in the taſk with unwearied induſtry from generation to generation, till they carried it nearly to perfection. They had too much penetration

tration not to ſee what uſe a due attention to the ſtate of writing might be of, towards fixing and giving permanence to that perfection, which they had purchaſed with ſuch labour; and had too much public ſpirit, and ardour for the glory of their country, not to endeavour to give immortality to the glorious works of their writers. The event has been anſwerable to their pains and expectations; their language will remain and be held in admiration to the end of time.

They were at that juncture the only people who endeavoured to model the graphic art according to its true uſe and end, according to the ſecond kind which I have mentioned in my diviſion, and which had ſounds for its immediate object; and their chief view in the regulation of it was to give an exact repreſentation of thoſe ſounds. In this they were afterwards imitated by the Romans. Whilſt the eaſtern countries, amongſt whom letters were invented and in uſe, long before they were carried into Greece, contented themſelves with the third ſtate of written language, which had the repreſentation of articulate ſounds for its object, but in the execution, was very imperfect and inaccurate. There need be no ſtronger proof given, of the very defective ſtate, in which the art of writing always remained amongſt them, than to

mention that the vowels were wholly omitted, and had no characters in the alphabet to mark them; and as it muſt be allowed, that the vowels are of all letters the moſt important, both to aſcertain the pronunciation, and meaning of words, it muſt alſo be granted, that this was an eſſential defect in the fundamentals, equally obſtructing both ends of written language, whether conſidered as the repreſentative of ſenſe or ſound, of ideas or words. The effect has been ſuch as might naturally be expected from ſuch a courſe; for the reſult of the enquiries into the ancient languages of the Eaſt, has been only endleſs controverſies, about both the meaning and pronunciation, amongſt thoſe who have given themſelves up to ſtudies of this kind; whilſt in the well-regulated Greek and Roman writings, the meaning of the words is as well aſcertained, as that of any living tongue, and ſo might the pronunciation alſo, in a great meaſure, if it were thought an object worthy of ſufficient attention. Though it muſt be allowed that on account of one ſmall defect in the graphic art, in thoſe countries, there would ſome difficulties occur, in adjuſting exactly the pronunciation, eſpecially as none of their grammars have been handed down to us. As this defect is the only one, which prevented their written language from being in the utmoſt ſtate

of

of perfection, ſo far as relates to the pronunciation of words, it deſerves to be taken notice of.

It has been already remarked, that the four fundamental rules of orthography, were ſo ſtrictly obſerved by them, that no one acquainted with their alphabet and rules of ſpelling, could make any miſtake in pronouncing, as to ſound. But as in pronouncing their words, it was of importance to obſerve quantity, as well as quality, no doubt they ſhould have had ſome marks, to diſtinguiſh the long, from the ſhort ſounds of their vowels. This was the only ſtumbling-block in the way of foreigners, which prevented their acquiring an accurate pronunciation of thoſe tongues by reading. The Greeks ſaw the defect, and began a reformation, by adding the characters of eta and omega to their alphabet, to diſtinguiſh the long from the ſhort ſounds of epſilon and omicron. Had they done the ſame by the three other vowels, or even without inventing new characters, affixed ſome marks to diſtinguiſh the long from the ſhort ſounds, the quantity of their ſyllables would have been ſettled to perpetuity; without having recourſe to laborious reſearches into proſody, and a multitude of rules to guide us in that article. And what have all theſe rules ended in? Not in fixing the true quantity for the ſpeaker, ſo that it may be diſtinguiſhed

guiſhed in pronunciation, (in which reſpect they are but of little uſe;) but for the writer, that he may be enabled to arrange his words in meaſure according to the cuſtom of the Ancients. Whilſt in general the ear acknowledges no difference in time between the long and the ſhort ſounds. But had the other three vowels been diſtinguiſhed in the ſame manner, we ſhould not only have had no occaſion for any rules of proſody whatſoever in Greek, but we ſhould never have failed to diſtinguiſh the long and ſhort quantities to the ear, by the different times taken up in pronouncing them. Of this there need not be a better proof offered, than what ariſes from matter of fact, in relation to the two vowels ſo diſtinguiſhed; with regard to which, as there was no occaſion for any, ſo are there no rules to be found in proſody; and we never fail to diſtinguiſh their quantity to the ear. The Romans did not follow the example of the Greeks ſo far, as to make any diſtinction between the marks of the different quantities even of thoſe two vowels, and therefore we are ſtill more liable to miſtakes in that reſpect, in pronouncing Latin, than Greek. And as the Roman alphabet has been adopted by all the nations of Europe, the ſame defect, of not marking the different quantities of the vowels, prevails in what are called the modern languages.

Thus

Thus we ſee that the art of writing words, was never brought to the degree of perfection of which it was capable, in any age or country, though the Greeks approached nearly to it. The principal defect lay in the vowels, which were wholly omitted by the eaſtern nations in general. The Greeks and Romans marked their ſounds with great accuracy, but not their quantity. Whilſt the Moderns, but particularly the Engliſh, are greatly defective in both articles. To bring the art to perfection, it would be only neceſſary to adhere cloſely to the rules obſerved by the Greeks, ſo far as they went; and to ſupply the ſingle defect in the article of quantity. The pronunciation of any language, built upon this model, might be acquired by reading, with equal certainty, by inhabitants of the different countries of the globe, with that of muſic, by aſſiſtance of the notes. Nor is this an ideal plan only, for it has in one inſtance been carried into execution, and by its ſucceſs, has given proof of the practicability, as well as reaſonableneſs of the deſign. According to this plan, have the modern Hebræans framed their written language. They reckon thirteen vowels, to which they have aſſigned thirteen different marks, by which they diſtinguiſh both their quantity and quality. Every other ſound has its diſtinct mark, and they are conſtant in the uſe of them. If there be a redundant,

dundant, or quieſcent letter, preſented to the eye, through cuſtom or analogy in ſpelling, it has alſo its peculiar mark, to ſhew that it is not to be ſounded. The conſequence of which has been, that the pronunciation of Hebrew in the method here laid down, is rendered ſo eaſy, that any one of moderate capacity, with but little aſſiſtance from a *Maſter*, may make himſelf perfect in it in a few days, ſo as never to be guilty of an errour in reading Hebrew with points. Is there any one who does not wiſh that that of Engliſh were as eaſily attainable.

But to this it will be immediately objected, that however right the deſign might appear in theory, it would be impoſſible to carry it into execution. That to follow the example of the latter Hebræans, the whole graphic art muſt be changed; that new characters muſt be introduced into the alphabet, to mark all the differences of the vowels, both in quantity and quality; that there would be no uſe of theſe if they were not transferred into our books, which muſt be all reprinted according to the new alphabet; that people muſt be taught their alphabet anew to enable them to read ſuch reprinted books; that it would be the height of abſurdity to ſuppoſe ſuch meaſures practicable, and therefore that the whole ſcheme, as chimerical, muſt fall to the ground.

Indeed any deſign of that ſort muſt prove to the

the laſt degree impracticable, and conſequently fail of its end. Nor could a thought of this kind enter into the head of any one, who knows that the whole power of a Roman emperor, was in vain exerted, to introduce a ſingle letter into their alphabet, the Æolic digamma; though ſuch a character was confeſſedly wanting. But in the preſent ſcheme it is not propoſed that there ſhould be the leaſt change in our alphabet, or alteration made in the mode of writing or ſpelling Engliſh. The object of it is, to fix ſuch a ſtandard of pronunciation, by means of viſible marks, that it may be in the power of every one, to acquire an accurate manner of uttering every word in the Engliſh tongue, by applying to that ſtandard. In order to this, the author of this ſcheme propoſes to publiſh a Dictionary, in which the true pronunciation, of all the words in our tongue, ſhall be pointed out by viſible and accurate marks. To effect this, one column ſhall exhibit the words in alphabetical order as they are written, or ſpelt; and in another column, oppoſite to each word ſhall be marked its juſt pronunciation. The principle upon which this is performed is the ſimpleſt that can be conceived. Any one of moderate capacity may in an hour's time make himſelf maſter of the marks, and then he can no more miſtake the pronunciation, than they who are acquainted with the

notes,

notes, can miſtake in reading muſic; or with the points in reading Hebrew.

To this Dictionary ſhall be prefixed a Rhetorical Grammar, upon the following plan:

1ſt, The number of ſimple ſounds in the Engliſh tongue ſhall be aſcertained. Such as have no peculiar letters in our alphabet to repreſent them ſhall be pointed out, and have proper marks aſſigned to them to diſtinguiſh them in writing, and proper names in ſpeaking of them.

2dly, All ſuch ſimple ſounds as are peculiar to the Engliſh ſhall be pointed out; and the difference in that reſpect between ours, the French, Italian, Spaniſh, and German, ſeverally ſhewn. The manner in which thoſe ſounds are formed ſhall be manifeſted; and a method laid down whereby maſters may ſpeedily teach foreigners to pronounce thoſe ſounds, and to make them familiar to the organs, ſo as to be uttered with eaſe.

3dly, The number of our double ſounds or or diphthongs (an article in which the groſſeſt miſtakes have been committed) ſhall be aſcertained; the manner of their formation, and the particular vowels whereof each is compounded, ſhall be made evident.

4thly, Syllables ſhall be treated of, and particularly ſuch combinations of letters in ſyllables, as are peculiar to our tongue, and the

manner of ſounding them, ſhall be ſhewn, and made eaſy. Under this head, alſo ſhall be contained ſuch combinations of letters in writing, as produce different ſounds in utterance, in any of the above mentioned languages, from what they do in ours.

5thly, Our manner of uniting ſyllables ſo as to form words ſhall be conſidered, and of diſtinguiſhing thoſe ſyllables from each other in pronunciation, ſhewing what letters are kept together, and what ſeparated in utterance; often erroneouſly marked in our grammars and ſpelling books, whoſe authors have divided their ſyllables, by rules that have no reference to pronunciation. Under this head will be laid open the nature and uſe of our accent, that grand maſter-key to the pronunciation of our tongue, whoſe nature has hitherto been little underſtood, or groſsly miſtaken. This is evidently ſhewn in our dictionaries, where the accent is invariably placed over the vowel of the accented ſyllable. Now nothing is of more moment in our tongue than to know when the accent is on the vowel, and when on the conſonant. By placing it conſtantly over the vowel, there is a rule of errour eſtabliſhed, which muſt infallibly miſlead provincials and foreigners, in the pronunciation of all words, where the accent ought to be on the conſonant. Thus a native of Scotland, upon ſeeing the

the word *phænómenon* thus accented in a dictionary is naturally led to dwell upon the vowel, and pronounces the word thus *phænō-menon*, giving the long ſound of *o* as in the word *gō*, and ending the ſyllable with the vowel; whereas were the accent over the *m*, as thus, *phenóme-non*, it would be a mark to him that the *o* is to be ſounded ſhort, and the *m* taken in to the preceding vowel in forming the ſyllable, as *phæ-nom-enon*; the *o* changing its ſound by means of the accent on the following *m*, in the ſame manner as if the *m* had been doubled, as in the word *common*. In like manner would he alſo ſound *obóminable*, *abō-minable*, *hab'it*, *hā-bit*, and ſo forth.

Now as it is an invariable rule throughout our tongue, that whenever the accent is on the conſonant, the ſound not only of the preceding vowel is always ſhortened, but no other vowel in the word has ever its full long ſound; and whenever the accent is on the vowel, that vowel always has its full long ſound and all the other vowels in the word are pronounced ſhort; there could not have been a more general guide to pronunciation, in one of the moſt material articles, than the marking this difference with accuracy. Whereas in the other way, it had been much better there had been no marks at all, as ſuch marks, in half the words of our tongue, neceſſarily lead into errour.

The whole to conclude with a key to the pronunciation of the Engliſh tongue, whereby learners may know how to pronounce moſt words in our language at ſight, notwithſtanding the irregularity of our ſpelling. And with reſpect to ſuch anomalous words, as cannot be reduced to any rule, as the learner, where he has no light from rule to guide him, may always have recourſe to the dictionary, it will be in the power of every one to acquire a juſt pronunciation of all our words, with eaſe and certainty.

Such a grammar and dictionary will lay the foundation for regulating and refining our ſpeech, till it is brought to the degree of perfection whereof in its nature it is capable; and afterwards of fixing it in that ſtate to perpetuity, by a ſure and ſettled ſtandard. For tho' in a living tongue changes are not to be prevented, whilſt any plauſible colour can be given that ſuch changes are made for the better; yet, after the general rules of analogy ſhall have been laid open, all alterations hereafter will be made in conformity to thoſe rules, in order to render our language more regular and complete. Nor will novelty or caprice, (the ſources of faſhion;) or partial views of the conſtitution of our tongue, have it in their power to innovate as uſual; for the riſing generation, preinſtructed in the true genius of our

tongue, and the rules by which it ought to be governed, will oppoſe any attempts in individuals, to introduce changes not made in conformity to thoſe rules. And ſuch alterations only, as ſhall by common ſuffrage be judged neceſſary to promote order and regularity in our tongue, will, by common ſuffrage, be admitted.

When a certain ſtandard of pronunciation is in every one's hands, men in general will find the benefit of it too great, readily to admit any alteration but ſuch as ſhall appear abſolutely neceſſary. Thus will our language be reſcued from that worſt of evils, a continual fluctuation, in which ſtate it has been from the time of the Saxons to this day.

Upon examination it will be found, that the pronunciation of our tongue has in general been formed upon the beſt principle in the world. Luckily for us the pedants bore no ſway in ſettling that part of our language; which province, by the power of faſhion, fell to the lot of people of education at court: who having no bias of particular or partial rules to miſguide them, were governed by one general rule, the very beſt by which the pronunciation of any tongue could be regulated, which was that of gradually changing the ſounds of words, from thoſe which were moſt difficult, to thoſe which were moſt eaſily uttered by the

organs

organs of ſpeech. And as it is an indiſputable truth, that the ſounds which are moſt eaſily uttered by the organs of ſpeech, are moſt pleaſing to the organs of hearing, it muſt be granted, that this is the very beſt rule by which the pronunciation of any language could be formed. Upon this principle, the pronunciation of Engliſh, as uſed by people of the beſt taſte at court, is ſo perfect, that there are few, of our words, capable of improvement in that reſpect. And this is a good reaſon for ſeizing this juncture to fix that pronunciation by a ſettled ſtandard, in order to make it permanent.

This ſtandard once fixed, the Engliſh tongue could never again be without a ſure one to refer to at all times. For though, in proceſs of time, ſome changes might take place, and be adopted into general uſe, yet thoſe changes would, from time to time, be marked by an Appendix to the Dictionary, if few; or, if they ſhould ſwell to any conſiderable number, by a new edition.

With regard to our ſpelling, as there are many alterations wanting, ſo it is probable that many will gradually take place. But thoſe changes will no longer be made by caprice, or from partial and miſtaken views of the uſe and end of written language. All mankind, convinced of the abſurdity of conſidering words upon paper, in any other light, than as repre-

ſentatives of words ſpoken; and reflecting on the great benefits that would ariſe, from making ſpelling a guide to pronunciation, will have that point only in view in all future innovations; and being no longer diſtracted by different principles, but having one obvious point only before their eyes, will in proceſs of time, carry it to as great a perfection, as the nature of our defective alphabet will admit.

Upon the whole, if ſuch a Grammar and Dictionary were publiſhed, they muſt ſoon be adopted into uſe by all ſchools profeſſing to teach Engliſh. The conſequence of teaching children by one method, and one uniform ſyſtem of rules, would be an uniformity of pronunciation in all ſo inſtructed. Thus might the riſing generation, born and bred in different countries, and counties, no longer have a variety of dialects, but as ſubjects of one king, like ſons of one father, have one common tongue. All natives of theſe realms would be reſtored to their birthright in commonage of language, which has been too long fenced in, and made the property of a few. And foreigners would no longer be inhoſpitably ſhut out, from a communication with us in an article ſo eſſentially neceſſary to the keeping up a ſocial intercourſe with us.

FINIS.

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM